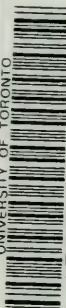


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EARLY ESSAYS BY JOHN STUART MILL

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EARLY ESSAYS

BY

JOHN STUART MILL

SELECTED FROM
THE ORIGINAL SOURCES BY

J. W. M. GIBBS

EDITOR OF "THE WORKS OF GOLDSMITH," ETC.

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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THE contents of this volume have been selected from Mill's numerous contributions to the periodical press between the year 1829, when he was beginning to write for the public, and the year 1844, when he published his first book. This book, entitled "Essays on Some Unsettled Questions of Political Economy," consisted of five articles, the last of which had appeared previously in the "Westminster Review" (in 1831), the other four having been written, but not published, at earlier dates. The volume is now very scarce, and as a good deal of biographical interest attaches to these early expressions of his views on his favourite science, they have been included bodily in the present selection.

There are other essays, contributed first to periodicals, which Mill reprinted, with slight alterations, in the four volumes, entitled "Dissertations and Discussions, Political, Philosophical, and Historical." These volumes are also out of print; but the few essays from them which will be found here have been reprinted from the original versions which appeared in the London and Westminster Reviews, such passages as Mill omitted in his reprint being placed within brackets.

In addition to the foregoing the reader will find several essays which appeared in periodicals, and have not before been reprinted. Considerable trouble has been expended in ransacking old volumes of the "London Review," "Westminster Review," etc., to unearth these. Two that will probably have most general interest are the reviews of Tennyson's poems and Carlyle's "French Revolution." That Mill himself did not think it worth while to republish these is easily comprehensible. They were written simply as reviews, and their subjects lay apart from the sociological questions which towards the end of his life mainly engaged his attention. But for that very reason they have a special interest for the student of his character; and their intrinsic merits, and the fact that in both cases they show an early and independent appreciation of two of the greatest English writers of the nineteenth century, will do more than justify their republication. And a similar justification will apply to the other two essays on poetry.

The concluding and important article on Bentham, to whose teaching Mill owed so much, and whose reputation may be said to owe in return so much to Mill, is one of those which appeared in the "Dissertations." The two appendices have been brought together for the first time from widely different sources, with a view to exhibiting in more completeness Mill's attitude towards his early master.

J. W. M. G.

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* * The publishers have to thank Messrs. Macmillan for permis-
sion to reprint the extracts from Lord Tennyson's poems in the
essay upon them.

ESSAYS
ON
SOME UNSETTLED QUESTIONS
OF
POLITICAL ECONOMY.

[*Written 1829-30 ; part published 1831 ; the five essays first
published 1844.*]

AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

OF these Essays, which were written in 1829 and 1830, the fifth alone has been previously printed. The other four have hitherto remained in manuscript, because, during the temporary suspension of public interest in the species of discussion to which they belong, there was no inducement to their publication.

They are now published (with a few merely verbal alterations) under the impression, that the controversies excited by Colonel Torrens' *Budget* have again called the attention of political economists to the discussions of the abstract science: and from the additional consideration, that the first paper relates expressly to the point upon which the question at issue between Colonel Torrens and his antagonists has principally turned.¹

¹ "The Budget: a Series of Letters on Financial, Commercial, and Colonial Policy. By a Member of the Political Economy Club," 1841-43, was the title of Colonel Torrens's book. He was a retired officer of marines, and one of the pioneers of the "Free Trade" policy. He owned "The Traveller" (the paper was afterwards amalgamated with the existing "Globe"), the editor, of which—Coulson, a barrister, who had been an amanuensis of Bentham—accepted as contributions the earliest of Mill's writings that appeared in the public press. This was in 1822, when Mill was only sixteen. Mill, though in most things agreeing with Torrens, controverted some of his arguments, and Torrens replied. Ricardo said, in his "Political Economy" (3rd ed., p. 318): "Among the most able of the publications on the impolicy of re-

From that paper it will be seen that opinions identical in principle with those promulgated by Colonel Torrens (there would probably be considerable difference as to the extent of their practical application) have been held by the writer for more than fifteen years: although he cannot claim to himself the original conception, but only the elaboration, of the fundamental doctrine of the Essay.

A prejudice appears to exist in many quarters against the theory in question, on the supposition of its being opposed to one of the most valuable results of modern political philosophy, the doctrine of Freedom of Trade between nation and nation. The opinions now laid before the readers are presented as corollaries necessarily following from the principles upon which Free Trade itself rests. The writer has also been careful to point out, that from these opinions no justification can be derived for any *protecting* duty, or other preference given to domestic over foreign industry. But in regard to those duties on foreign commodities which do not operate as protection, but are maintained solely for revenue, and which do not touch either the necessities of life or the materials and instruments of production, it is his opinion that any relaxation of such duties, beyond what may be required by the interest of the revenue itself, should in general be made contingent upon the adoption of some corresponding degree of freedom of trade with this country, by the nation from which the commodities are imported.¹

stricting the importation of corn may be classed Colonel Torrens's 'Essay on the External Corn Trade' (4th ed., 1827). Colonel R. Torrens published many similar works. He was born in 1780, and died in 1864.—ED.

¹ According to Mill's "Autobiography" (p. 121), some of the theories of these five essays were worked out with G. J. Graham (afterwards assignee in the Bankruptcy Court), one, like Mill, of the Utilitarian Society, which used to meet, 1822 and later, in a room in Grote's banking house in Threadneedle Street.—ED.

ESSAY I.

OF THE LAWS OF INTERCHANGE BETWEEN NATIONS; AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE GAINS OF COMMERCE AMONG THE COUNTRIES OF THE COM- MERCIAL WORLD.

OF the truths with which political economy has been enriched by Mr. Ricardo, none has contributed more to give to that branch of knowledge the comparatively precise and scientific character which it at present bears, than the more accurate analysis which he performed of the nature of the advantage which nations derive from a mutual interchange of their productions. Previously to his time, the benefits of foreign trade were deemed, even by the most philosophical inquirers, to consist in affording a vent for surplus produce, or in enabling a portion of the national capital to replace itself with a profit. The futility of the theory implied in these and similar phrases, was an obvious consequence from the speculations of writers even anterior to Mr. Ricardo. But it was he who first, in the chapter on Foreign Trade, of his immortal "Principles of Political Economy and Taxation,"¹ substituted for the

¹ The first edition of Ricardo's book appeared in 1817, the second in 1819, and the third in 1821. The author died in 1823. A reprint of the third edition, with notes, etc., by E. C. K. Gonner,

former vague and unscientific, if not positively false, conceptions with regard to the advantage of trade, a philosophical exposition which explains, with strict precision, the nature of that advantage, and affords an accurate measure of its amount.¹

He shewed, that the advantage of an interchange of commodities between nations consists simply and solely in this, that it enables each to obtain, with a given amount of labour and capital, a greater quantity of all commodities taken together. This it accomplishes by enabling each, with a quantity of one commodity which has cost it so much labour and capital, to purchase a quantity of another commodity which, if produced at home, would have required labour and capital to a greater amount. To render the importation of an article more advantageous than its production, it is not necessary that the foreign country should be able to produce it with less labour and capital than ourselves. We may even have a positive advantage in its production: but, if we are so far favoured by circumstances as to have a still greater positive advantage in the production of some other article which is in demand in the foreign country, we may be able to obtain a greater return to our labour and capital by employing none of it in pro-

M.A., was published in Bohn's Economic Library, 1891. Mr. Gonner says that the third edition is much altered.—ED.

¹ Mr. W. L. Courtney calls J. S. Mill "Ricardo's disciple" in political economy (Life of Mill, "Great Writers" series, p. 98), adding that—"He himself used to say that Ricardo had supplied the backbone of the science, but, as Cairnes remarked in the notice of Mill's labours in the *Examiner* it is no less certain that the limbs, the joints, and the muscular developments were the work of Mill." Further on Mr. Courtney says: "Take for example the development which Mill gives to Ricardo's doctrine of foreign trade, where the skeleton is clothed with flesh, and principles of the most abstract kind are translated into concrete language, and brought to explain familiar facts."—ED.

ducing the article in which our advantage is least, but devoting it all to the production of that in which our advantage is greatest, and giving this to the foreign country in exchange for the other. It is not a difference in the *absolute* cost of production, which determines the interchange, but a difference in the *comparative* cost. It may be to our advantage to procure iron from Sweden in exchange for cottons, even although the mines of England as well as her manufactories should be more productive than those of Sweden ; for if we have an advantage of one-half in cottons, and only an advantage of a quarter in iron, and could sell our cottons to Sweden at the price which Sweden must pay for them if she produced them herself, we should obtain our iron with an advantage of one-half, as well as our cottons. We may often, by trading with foreigners, obtain their commodities at a smaller expense of labour and capital than they cost to the foreigners themselves. The bargain is still advantageous to the foreigner, because the commodity which he receives in exchange, though it has cost us less, would have cost him more. As often as a country possesses two commodities, one of which it can produce with less labour, comparatively to what it would cost in a foreign country, than the other ; so often it is the interest of the country to export the first mentioned commodity and to import the second ; even though it might be able to produce both the one and the other at a less expense of labour than the foreign country can produce them, but not less in the same degree ; or might be unable to produce either except at a greater expense, but not greater in the same degree.

On the contrary, if it produces both commodities with greater facility, or both with greater difficulty, and greater in exactly the same degree, there will be no motive to interchange.

“ If the cloth and the corn, each of which required 100

days' labour in Poland, required each 150 days' labour in England; it would follow, that the cloth of 150 days' labour in England, if sent to Poland, would be equal to the cloth of 100 days' labour in Poland: if exchanged for corn, therefore, it would exchange for the corn of only 100 days' labour. But the corn of 100 days' labour in Poland, was supposed to be the same quantity with that of 150 days' labour in England. With 150 days' labour in cloth, therefore, England would only get as much corn in Poland as she could raise with 150 days' labour at home; and she would, in importing it, have the cost of carriage besides. In these circumstances no exchange would take place.

"If, on the other hand, while the cloth produced with 100 days' labour in Poland was produced with 150 days' labour in England, the corn which was produced in Poland with 100 days' labour could not be produced in England with less than 200 days' labour; an adequate motive to exchange would immediately arise. With a quantity of cloth which England produced with 150 days' labour, she would be able to purchase as much corn in Poland as was there produced with 100 days' labour; but the quantity, which was there produced with 100 days' labour, would be as great as the quantity produced in England with 200 days' labour. [* * *]

"[But] the power of Poland would be reciprocal. With a quantity of corn which cost her 100 days' labour, equal to the quantity produced in England by 200 days' labour, she could in the supposed case purchase in England the produce of 200 days' labour in cloth." But "the produce of 150 days' labour in England in the article of cloth would be equal to the produce of 100 days' labour in Poland."¹

¹ "Elements of Political Economy," by James Mill, Esq., 3rd ed., pp. 120, 121. [Mill's quotation from his father's third edition, the date of which was 1826, needs the insertions we have put in

The remainder of what Mr. Ricardo has done for the philosophical exposition of the principles of foreign trade, is to show, that the truth of the propositions now recapitulated is not affected by the introduction of money as a medium of exchange; the precious metals always tending to distribute themselves in such a manner throughout the commercial world, that every country shall import all that it would have imported, and export all that it would have exported, if exchanges had taken place, as in the example above supposed, by barter.

To this branch of the subject we shall, in the sequel of this essay, return. At present it will be more convenient that we should continue to suppose, that exchanges take place by the direct trucking of one commodity against another.

It is established, that the advantage which two countries derive from trading with each other, results from the more advantageous employment which thence arises, of the labour and capital—for shortness let us say the labour—of both jointly. The circumstances are such, that if each country confines itself to the production of one commodity, there is a greater total return to the labour of both together; and this increase of produce forms the whole of what the two countries taken together gain by the trade.

It is the purpose of the present essay to inquire, in what proportion the increase of produce, arising from the saving of labour, is divided between the two countries.

This question was not entered into by Mr. Ricardo, whose attention was engrossed by far more important questions, and who, having a science to create, had not

brackets to be exact. The asterisks, of course, stand for a passage left out. The younger Mill, however, helped the elder in the production of the “Elements” (the first edition of which appeared in 1821), and he may, therefore, in this quotation be, to some extent, dealing with his own work.—ED.]

time, or room, to occupy himself with much more than the leading principles. When he had done enough to enable anyone who came after him, and who took the necessary pains, to do all the rest, he was satisfied. He very rarely followed out the principles of the science into the ramifications of their consequences. But we believe that to no one, who has thoroughly entered into the spirit of his discoveries, will even the minutiae of the science offer any difficulty but that which is constituted by the necessity of patience and circumspection in tracing principles to their results.

Mr. Ricardo, while intending to go no further into the question of the advantage of foreign trade than to show what it consisted of, and under what circumstances it arose, unguardedly expressed himself as if each of the two countries making the exchange separately gained the whole of the difference between the comparative costs of the two commodities in one country and in the other. But, the whole gain of both countries together, consisting in the saving of labour; and the saving of labour being exactly equal to the difference between the costs, in the two countries, of the one commodity as compared with the other; the two countries taken together gain no more than this difference: and if either country gains the whole of it, the other country derives no advantage from the trade.

Suppose, for example, that 10 yards of broadcloth cost in England as much labour as 15 yards of linen, and in Germany as much as 20. If England sends 10 yards of broadcloth to Germany, and is able to exchange them for linen according to the German cost of production, she will get 20 yards of linen, with a quantity of labour with which she could not have produced more than 15; and will gain, therefore, 5 yards on every 15, or $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. But in this case Germany would obtain only 10 yards of cloth for 20 of linen. Now, 10 yards of cloth cost exactly the same

quantity of labour in Germany as 20 of linen; Germany, therefore, derives no advantage from the trade, more than she would possess if it did not exist.

So, on the other hand, if Germany sends 15 yards of linen to England, and finding the relative value of the two articles in that country determined by the English costs of production, is enabled to purchase with 15 yards of linen 10 yards of cloth; Germany now gains 5 yards, just as England did before,—for with 15 yards of linen she purchases 10 yards of cloth, when to produce these 10 yards she must have employed as much labour as would have enabled her to produce 20 yards of linen. But in this case England would gain nothing: she would only obtain, for her 10 yards of cloth, 15 yards of linen, which is exactly the comparative cost at which she could have produced them.

This, which was not an error, but a mere oversight of Mr. Ricardo, arising from his having left the question of the division of the advantage entirely unnoticed, was first corrected in the third edition of Mr. Mill's "Elements of Political Economy." It can hardly, however, be said that Mr. Mill has prosecuted the inquiry any further; which, indeed, would have been quite as inconsistent with the nature of his plan as of Mr. Ricardo's.

1. When the trade is established between the two countries, the two commodities will exchange for each other at the same rate of interchange in both countries—bating the cost of carriage, of which, for the present, it will be more convenient to omit the consideration. Supposing, therefore, for the sake of argument, that the carriage of the commodities from one country to another could be effected without labour and without cost, no sooner would the trade be opened than, it is self-evident, the value of the two commodities, estimated in each other, would come to a level in both countries.

If we knew what this level would be, we should know in what proportion the two countries would share the advantage of the trade.

When each country produced both commodities for itself, 10 yards of broadcloth exchanged for 15 yards of linen in England, and for 20 in Germany. They will now exchange for the same number of yards of linen in both. For what number? If for 15 yards, England will be just as she was, and Germany will gain all. If for 20 yards, Germany will be as before, and England will derive the whole of the benefit. If for any number intermediate between 15 and 20, the advantage will be shared between the two countries. If, for example, 10 yards of cloth exchange for 18 of linen, England will gain an advantage of 3 yards on every 15, Germany will save 2 out of every 20.

The problem is, what are the causes which determine the proportion in which the cloth of England and the linen of Germany will exchange for each other?

This, therefore, is a question concerning exchangeable value. There must be something which determines how much of one commodity another commodity will purchase; and there is no reason to suppose that the law of exchangeable value is more difficult of ascertainment in this case than in other cases.

The law, however, cannot be precisely the same as in the common cases. When two articles are produced in the immediate vicinity of one another, so that, without expatriating himself, or moving to a distance, the capitalist has the choice of producing one or the other, the quantities of the two articles which will exchange for each other will be, on the average, those which are produced by equal quantities of labour. But this cannot be applied to the case where the two articles are produced in two different countries; because men do not usually leave their country, or even send their capital abroad, for the sake of those

small differences of profit which are sufficient to determine their choice of a business, or of an investment, in their own country and neighbourhood.

The principle, that value is proportional to cost of production, being consequently inapplicable, we must revert to a principle anterior to that of cost of production, and from which this last flows as a consequence,—namely, the principle of demand and supply.

In order to apply this principle, with any advantage, to the solution of the question which now occupies us, the principle itself, and the idea attached to the term demand, must be conceived with a precision, which the loose manner in which the words are used generally prevents.

It is well known that the quantity of any commodity which can be disposed of, varies with the price. The higher the price, the fewer will be the purchasers, and the smaller the quantity sold. The lower the price, the greater will in general be the number of purchasers, and the greater the quantity disposed of. This is true of almost all commodities whatever: though of some commodities, to diminish the consumption in any given degree would require a much greater rise of price than of others.

Whatever be the commodity—the supply in any market being given, there is some price at which the whole of the supply exactly will find purchasers, and no more. That, whatever it be, is the price at which, by the effect of competition, the commodity will be sold. If the price be higher, the whole of the supply will not be disposed of, and the sellers, by their competition, will bring down the price. If the price be lower, there will be found purchasers for a larger supply, and the competition of these purchasers will raise the price.

This, then, is what we mean, when we say that price, or exchangeable value, depends on demand and supply. We should express the principle more accurately, if we were to

say, the price so regulates itself that the demand shall be exactly sufficient to carry off the supply.

Let us now apply the principle of demand and supply, thus understood, to the interchange of broadcloth and linen between England and Germany.

As exchangeable value in this case, as in every other, is proverbially fluctuating, it does not matter what we suppose it to be when we begin; we shall soon see whether there be any fixed point about which it oscillates—which it has a tendency always to approach to, and to remain at.

Let us suppose, then, that by the effect of what Adam Smith calls the higgling of the market, 10 yards of cloth, in both countries, exchange for 17 yards of linen.

The demand for a commodity, that is, the quantity of it which can find a purchaser, varies, as we have before remarked, according to the price. In Germany, the price of 10 yards of cloth is now 17 yards of linen; or whatever quantity of money is equivalent in Germany to 17 yards of linen. Now, that being the price, there is some particular number of yards of cloth, which will be in demand, or will find purchasers, at that price. There is some given quantity of cloth, more than which could not be disposed of at that price,—less than which, at that price, would not fully satisfy the demand. Let us suppose this quantity to be 1,000 times 10 yards.

Let us now turn our attention to England. There, the price of 17 yards of linen is 10 yards of cloth, or whatever quantity of money is equivalent in England to 10 yards of cloth. There is some particular number of yards of linen, which, at that price, will exactly satisfy the demand, and no more. Let us suppose that this number is 1,000 times 17 yards.

As 17 yards of linen are to 10 yards of cloth, so are 1,000 times 17 yards to 1,000 times 10 yards. At the existing exchangeable value, the linen which England re-

quires, will exactly pay for the quantity of cloth which, on the same terms of interchange, Germany requires. The demand on each side is precisely sufficient to carry off the supply on the other. The conditions required by the principle of demand and supply are fulfilled, and the two commodities will continue to be interchanged, as we supposed them to be, in the ratio of 17 yards of linen for 10 yards of cloth.

But our supposition might have been different. Suppose that, at the assumed rate of interchange, England had been disposed to consume no greater quantity of linen than 800 times 17 yards; it is evident that, at the rate supposed, this would not have sufficed to pay for the 1,000 times 10 yards of cloth, which we have supposed Germany to require at the assumed value. Germany would be able to procure no more than 800 times 10 yards, at that price. To procure the remaining 200, which she would have no means of doing but by bidding higher for them, she would offer more than 17 yards of linen in exchange for 10 yards of cloth; let us suppose her to offer 18. At that price, perhaps, England would be inclined to purchase a greater quantity of linen. She could consume, possibly, at that price, 900 times 18 yards. On the other hand, cloth having risen in price, the demand of Germany for it would, probably, have diminished. If, instead of 1,000 times 10 yards, she is now contented with 900 times 10 yards, these will exactly pay for the 900 times 18 yards of linen which England is willing to take at the altered price: the demand on each side will again exactly suffice to take off the corresponding supply; and 10 yards for 18 will be the rate at which, in both countries, cloth will exchange for linen.

The converse of all this would have happened if instead of 800 times 17 yards, we had supposed that England, at the rate of 10 for 17, would have taken 1,200 times

17 yards of linen. In this case, it is England whose demand is not fully supplied; it is England who, by bidding for more linen, will alter the rate of interchange to her own disadvantage; and 10 yards of cloth will fall, in both countries, below the value of 17 yards of linen. By this fall of cloth, or what is the same thing, this rise of linen, the demand of Germany for cloth will increase, and the demand of England for linen will diminish, till the rate of interchange has so adjusted itself that the cloth and the linen will exactly pay for another; and when once this point is attained, values will remain as they are.

It may be considered, therefore, as established, that when two countries trade together in two commodities, the exchangeable value of these commodities relatively to each other will adjust itself to the inclinations and circumstances of the consumers on both sides, in such manner that the quantities required by each country, of the article which it imports from its neighbour, shall be exactly sufficient to pay for one another. As the inclinations and circumstances of consumers cannot be reduced to any rule, so neither can the proportions in which the two commodities will be interchanged. We know that the limits within which the variation is confined are the ratio between their costs of production in the one country, and the ratio between their costs of production in the other. Ten yards of cloth cannot exchange for more than 20 yards of linen, nor for less than 15. But they may exchange for any intermediate number. The ratios, therefore, in which the advantage of the trade may be divided between the two nations, are various. The circumstances on which the proportionate share of each country more remotely depends, admit only of a very general indication.

It is even possible to conceive an extreme case, in which the whole of the advantage resulting from the interchange would be reaped by one party, the other country gaining

nothing at all. There is no absurdity in the hypothesis, that of some given commodity a certain quantity is all that is wanted at any price, and that when that quantity is obtained, no fall in the exchangeable value would induce other consumers to come forward, or those who are already supplied to take more. Let us suppose that this is the case in Germany with cloth. Before her trade with England commenced, when 10 yards of cloth cost her as much labour as 20 yards of linen, she nevertheless consumed as much cloth as she wanted under any circumstances, and if she could obtain it at the rate of 10 yards of cloth for 15 of linen, she would not consume more. Let this fixed quantity be 1,000 times 10 yards. At the rate, however, of 10 for 20, England would want more linen than would be equivalent to this quantity of cloth. She would consequently offer a higher value for linen; or, what is the same thing, she would offer her cloth at a cheaper rate. But as by no lowering of the value could she prevail on Germany to take a greater quantity of cloth, there would be no limit to the rise of linen, or fall of cloth, until the demand of England for linen was reduced by the rise of its value, to the quantity which 1,000 times 10 yards of cloth would purchase. It might be, that to produce this diminution of the demand, a less fall would not suffice, than one which would make 10 yards of cloth exchange for 15 of linen. Germany would then gain the whole of the advantage, and England would be exactly as she was before the trade commenced. It would be for the interest, however, of Germany herself, to keep her linen a little below the value at which it could be produced in England, in order to keep herself from being supplanted by the home producer. England, therefore, would always benefit in some degree by the existence of the trade, though it might be in a very trifling one.

But in general there will not be this extreme inequality

in the degree in which the demand in the two countries varies with variations in the price. The advantage will probably be divided equally, oftener than in any one unequal ratio that can be named; though the division will be much oftener, on the whole, unequal than equal.

2. We shall now examine whether the same law of interchange, which we have shown to apply upon the supposition of barter, holds good after the introduction of money. Mr. Ricardo found that his more general proposition stood this test; and as the proposition which we have just demonstrated is only a further development of his principle, we shall probably find that it suffers as little, by a mere change in the mode (for it is no more) in which one commodity is exchanged against another.

We may at first make whatever supposition we will with respect to the value of money. Let us suppose, therefore, that before the opening of the trade, the price of cloth is the same in both countries, namely, six shillings per yard.¹ As 10 yards of cloth were supposed to exchange in England for 15 yards of linen, in Germany for 20, we must suppose that linen is sold in England at four shillings per yard, in Germany at three. Cost of carriage and importer's profit are left, as before, out of consideration.

In this state of prices, cloth, it is evident, cannot yet be exported from England into Germany. But linen can be imported from Germany into England. It will be so, and, in the first instance, the linen will be paid for in money.

The efflux of money from England, and its influx into Germany, will raise money prices in the latter country, and lower them in the former. Linen will rise in Germany above three shillings per yard, and cloth above six shillings. Linen in England being imported from Germany, will

¹ The figures used are of course arbitrary, having no reference to any existing prices.

(since cost of carriage is not reckoned) sink to the same price as in that country, while cloth will fall below six shillings. As soon as the price of cloth is lower in England than in Germany, it will begin to be exported, and the price of cloth in Germany will fall to what it is in England. As long as the cloth exported does not suffice to pay for the linen imported, money will continue to flow from England into Germany, and prices generally will continue to fall in England, and rise in Germany. By the fall, however, of cloth in England, cloth will fall in Germany also, and the demand for it will increase. By the rise of linen in Germany, linen must rise in England also, and the demand for it will diminish. Although the increased exportation of cloth takes place at a lower price, and the diminished importation of linen at a higher, yet the total money value of the exportation would probably increase, that of the importation diminish. As cloth fell in price and linen rose, there would be some particular price of both articles at which the cloth exported, and the linen imported, would exactly pay for each other. At this point prices would remain, because money would then cease to move out of England into Germany. What this point might be, would entirely depend upon the circumstances and inclinations of the purchasers on both sides. If the fall of cloth did not much increase the demand for it in Germany, and the rise of linen did not diminish very rapidly the demand for it in England, much money must pass before the equilibrium is restored; cloth would fall very much, and linen would rise, until England, perhaps, had to pay nearly as much for it as when she produced it for herself. But if, on the contrary, the fall of cloth caused a very rapid increase of the demand for it in Germany, and the rise of linen in Germany reduced very rapidly the demand in England from what it was under the influence of the first cheapness produced by the opening

of the trade; the cloth would very soon suffice to pay for the linen, little money would pass between the two countries, and England would derive a large portion of the benefit of the trade. We have thus arrived at precisely the same conclusion, in supposing the employment of money, which we found to hold under the supposition of barter.

In what shape the benefit accrues to the two nations from the trade, is clear enough. Germany, before the commencement of the trade, paid six shillings per yard for broadcloth. She now obtains it at a lower price. This, however, is not the whole of her advantage. As the money prices of all her other commodities have risen, the money incomes of all her producers have increased. This is no advantage to them in buying from each other; because the price of what they buy has risen in the same ratio with their means of paying for it: but it is an advantage to them in buying anything which has not risen; and still more, anything which has fallen. They therefore benefit as consumers of cloth, not merely to the extent to which cloth has fallen, but also to the extent to which other prices have risen. Suppose that this is one-tenth. The same proportion of their money incomes as before, will suffice to supply their other wants, and the remainder, being increased one-tenth in amount, will enable them to purchase one-tenth more cloth than before, even though cloth had not fallen. But it has fallen: so that they are doubly gainers. If they do not choose to increase their consumption of cloth, this does not prevent them from being gainers. They purchase the same quantity with less money, and have more to expend upon their other wants.

In England, on the contrary, general money-prices have fallen. Linen, however, has fallen more than the rest; having been lowered in price, by importation from a country

where it was cheaper, whereas the others have fallen only from the consequent efflux of money. Notwithstanding, therefore, the general fall of money-prices, the English producers will be exactly as they were in all other respects, while they will gain as purchasers of linen.

The greater the efflux of money required to restore the equilibrium, the greater will be the gain of Germany; both by the fall of cloth, and by the rise of her general prices. The less the efflux of money requisite, the greater will be the gain of England; because the price of linen will continue lower, and her general prices will not be reduced so much. It must not, however, be imagined that high money-prices are a good, and low money-prices an evil, in themselves. But the higher the general money-prices in any country, the greater will be that country's means of purchasing those commodities which, being imported from abroad, are independent of the causes which keep prices high at home.

3. We have hitherto supposed the carriage to be performed without labour or expense. If we abandon this supposition, we must correct the statement of the case in a slight degree. The prices of the two articles will no longer, when the trade is opened, be the same in both countries, nor will the articles exchange for one another at the same rate in both. Ten yards of cloth will purchase in Germany a quantity of linen greater than in England by a percentage equal to the entire cost of conveyance both of the cloth to Germany and of the linen to England. The money-price of linen will be higher in England than in Germany, by the cost of carriage of the linen. The money-price of cloth will be higher in Germany than in England, by the cost of carriage of the cloth.

The expense of the carriage is evidently a deduction *pro tanto* from the saving of labour produced by the establishment of the trade. The two countries together, therefore,

have their gains by the trade diminished, by the amount of the cost of carriage of both commodities. But here the question arises, which of the two countries bears this deduction, or in what proportion it is divided between them?

At the first inspection it would appear that each country bears its own cost of carriage, that is, that each country pays the carriage of the commodity which it imports. Upon this supposition, each country would gain whatever share of the joint saving of labour would otherwise fall to its lot, *minus* the cost of bringing from the other country the commodity which it imports. This solution is rendered plausible by the circumstance just now mentioned, that the price of the commodity will be higher in the country which imports it, than in the country which exports it, by the amount of the cost of carriage. If linen is sold in England at a higher price than in Germany, by a percentage equal to the cost of carriage of the linen, it appears obvious that England pays for the carriage of the linen, and Germany, by parity of reason, for that of the cloth.

But if we apply to these questions the principles already explained, we shall see that this is not by any means a universal law: the fact may correspond with it, or it may not.

For suppose that the prices have adjusted themselves, no matter how, and that the imports and exports balance one another, each commodity, of course, being dearer by the cost of carriage, in the country which imports than in that which exports it: and suppose now that the cost of carriage, both of the one and of the other, were suddenly and miraculously annihilated, and that the commodities could pass from country to country without expense. If each country bore its own cost of carriage before, each country will save its own cost of carriage now. Cloth, in Germany, will in that case fall exactly to what it is in England; linen in England, to what it is in Germany.

Now this fall of price, supposing it to happen, will probably affect the demand on both sides ; and it will either affect it alike in both countries, or it will affect it unequally. It will affect it alike, if the fall of price does not affect the demand at all, or if it affects it equally in both countries. If either of these results should take place, the cloth and the linen would continue to balance each other as before : no money would pass from one country to the other ; prices in both would continue at the point to which they had fallen, and each country would exactly save the cost of carriage on the commodity which it imports from the other.

But the result might be, that the fall of price might not have an effect exactly equal, on the demand in the two countries. Suppose, for instance, that the fall of cloth in Germany owing to the saving of the cost of carriage, did not increase the demand for cloth in Germany ; but that the fall of linen in England from a like cause, did increase the demand for linen in England. The linen imported would be more than could be paid for by the cloth exported : the difference must be paid in money : the change in the distribution of the precious metals between the two countries would lower the price of cloth in England (and consequently in Germany), while it would raise the price of linen in Germany (and consequently in England). Germany, therefore, by the annihilation of cost of carriage, would save in price more than the cost of carriage of the cloth ; England would save less in price than the cost of carriage of the linen. But if by the miraculous annihilation of cost of carriage, England would not *save* the whole of the carriage of her imports, it follows that England did not previously *pay* the whole of that cost of carriage.

Thus, the division of the cost of trade, and the division of the advantage of trade, are governed by precisely the same principles ; and the only general proposition which

can be affirmed respecting the cost is, that it is *pro tanto* a deduction from the advantage. It cannot even be maintained that the cost is shared in the same proportion as the advantage is, because the increase of the demand for a commodity as its price falls is not governed by any fixed law. Suppose, for instance, that the advantage happened to be divided equally: this must be because the greater cheapness arising from the establishment of the trade, either did not affect the demand at all or affected it in an equal proportion on both sides. Now, because such is the effect of the degree of increased cheapness resulting from importation burthened with cost of carriage, it would not follow that the still greater degree of cheapness, produced by the additional saving of the cost of carriage itself, would also affect the demand of both countries in precisely an equal degree. But we cannot be said to bear an expense, which, if saved, would be saved to somebody else, and not to us. Two countries may have equal shares of the clear benefit of the trade, while, if the cost of carriage were saved, they would divide that saving unequally. If so, they divide the gross gain in one unequal ratio, the cost in another unequal ratio, though their shares of the cost being deducted from their shares of the gain leave equal remainders.

4. The question naturally suggests itself, whether any country, by its own legislative policy, can engross to itself a larger share of the benefits of foreign commerce, than would fall to it in the natural or spontaneous course of trade.

The answer is, it can. By taxing exports, for instance, we may, under certain circumstances, produce a division of the advantage of the trade more favourable to ourselves. In some cases, we may draw into our coffers, at the expense of foreigners, not only the whole tax, but more than the tax: in other cases, we should gain exactly the tax,—in others, less than the tax. In this last case, a part

of the tax is borne by ourselves: possibly the whole, possibly even, as we shall show, more than the whole.

Suppose that England taxes her export of cloth: the tax not being supposed high enough to induce Germany to produce cloth for herself. The price at which cloth can be sold in Germany is augmented by the tax. This will probably diminish the quantity consumed. It may diminish it so much, that even at the increased price, there will not be required so great a money value as before. It may diminish it in such a ratio, that the money value of the quantity consumed will be exactly the same as before. Or it may not diminish it at all, or so little, that, in consequence of the higher price, a greater money value will be purchased than before. In this last case, England will gain, at the expense of Germany, not only the whole amount of the duty, but more. For the money value of her exports to Germany being increased, while her imports remain the same, money will flow into England from Germany. The price of cloth will rise in England, and consequently in Germany; but the price of linen will fall in Germany, and consequently in England. We shall export less cloth, and import more linen, till the equilibrium is restored. It thus appears, what is at first sight somewhat remarkable, that, by taxing her exports, England would, under some conceivable circumstances, not only gain from her foreign customers the whole amount of the tax, but would also get her imports cheaper. She would get them cheaper in two ways,—for she would obtain them for less money, and would have more money to purchase them with. Germany, on the other hand, would suffer doubly: she would have to pay for her cloth a price increased not only by the duty, but by the influx of money into England, while the same change in the distribution of the circulating medium would leave her less money to purchase it with.

This, however, is only one of three possible cases. If,

after the imposition of the duty, Germany requires so diminished a quantity of cloth, that its total money value is exactly the same as before, the balance of trade will be undisturbed: England will gain the duty, Germany will lose it, and nothing more. If, again, the imposition of the duty occasions such a falling off in the demand, that Germany requires a less pecuniary value than before, our exports will no longer pay for our imports, money must pass from England into Germany, and Germany's share of the advantage of the trade will be increased. By the change in the distribution of money, cloth will fall in England; and therefore it will, of course, fall in Germany. Thus Germany will not pay the whole of the tax. From the same cause, linen will rise in Germany, and consequently in England. When this alteration of prices has so adjusted the demand, that the cloth and the linen again pay for one another, the result is, that Germany has paid only a part of the tax, and the remainder of what has been received into our treasury has come indirectly out of the pockets of our own consumers of linen, who pay a higher price for that imported commodity, in consequence of the tax on our exports, which at the same time they, in consequence of the efflux of money and consequent fall of prices, have smaller money incomes wherewith to pay for the linen at that advanced price.

It is not an impossible supposition that, by taxing our exports, we might not only gain nothing from the foreigner, the tax being paid out of our own pockets, but might even compel our own people to pay a second tax to the foreigner. Suppose, as before, that the demand of Germany for cloth falls off so much on the imposition of the duty, that she requires a smaller money value than before, but that the case is so different with linen in England, that when the price rises the demand either does not fall off at all, or so little that the money value required is greater than before.

The first effect of laying on the duty is, as before, that the cloth exported will no longer pay for the linen imported. Money will, therefore, flow out of England into Germany. One effect is to raise the price of linen in Germany, and, consequently, in England. But this, by the supposition, instead of stopping the efflux of money, only makes it greater, because the higher the price, the greater the money value of the linen consumed. The balance, therefore, can only be restored by the other effect, which is going on at the same time, namely, the fall of cloth in the English, and, consequently, in the German market. Even when cloth has fallen so low that its price with the duty is only equal to what its price without the duty was at first, it is not a necessary consequence that the fall will stop; for the same amount of exportation as before will not now suffice to pay the increased money value of the imports; and although the German consumers have now not only cloth at the old price, but likewise increased money incomes, it is not certain that they will be inclined to employ the increase of their incomes in increasing their purchases of cloth. The price of cloth, therefore, must perhaps fall, to restore the equilibrium, more than the whole amount of the duty; Germany may be enabled to import cloth at a lower price when it is taxed, than when it was untaxed: and this gain she will acquire at the expense of the English consumers of linen, who, in addition, will be the real payers of the whole of what is received at their own custom-house under the name of duties on the export of cloth.

Such are the extremely various effects which may result to ourselves, and to our customers, from the imposition of taxes on our exports: ¹ and the determining circumstances

¹ We have not deemed it necessary to enter minutely into all the circumstances which might modify the results mentioned in the text. For example, let us revert to the first case, that in

are of a nature so imperfectly ascertainable, that it must be almost impossible to decide with any certainty, even after the tax has been imposed, whether we have been gainers by it or losers. It is certain, however, that whatever we gain, is lost by somebody else, and there is the expense of the collection besides: if international morality, therefore, were rightly understood and acted upon, such taxes, as being contrary to the universal weal, would not exist. Moreover, the imposition of such a tax frequently will, and always may, expose a country to lose this branch of its trade altogether, or to carry it on with diminished advantage, in consequence of the competition of untaxed exporters from other countries, or of the domestic producers in the country to which it exports. Even on the most selfish principles, therefore, the benefit of such a tax is always extremely precarious.

5. We have had an example of a tax on exports, that is, on foreigners, falling in part on ourselves. We shall, therefore, not be surprised if we find a tax on imports, that is, on ourselves, partly falling upon foreigners.

which the demand for cloth in Germany is so little affected by the rise of price in consequence of the tax, that the quantity bought exceeds in pecuniary value what it was before. As the German consumers lay out more money in cloth, they have less to lay out in other things; other money prices will fall; among the rest that of linen; and this may so increase the demand for linen in England as to restore the equilibrium of exports and imports without any passage of money. But England's treasury will still gain from Germany the whole of the tax, and the English people will buy their linen cheaper besides. Again, in the opposite case, where the tax so diminishes the demand, that a smaller pecuniary value is required than before. The German consumers have, therefore, more to expend in other things; these, and among the rest linen, will rise; and this may so diminish the demand for linen in England, as to restore the equilibrium without the transmission of money. But the effect, as respects the division of the advantage, is still as stated in the text.

Instead of taxing the cloth which we export, suppose that we tax the linen which we import. The duty which we are now supposing must not be what is termed a protecting duty, that is, a duty sufficiently high to induce us to produce the article at home. If it had this effect, it would destroy entirely the trade both in cloth and in linen, and both countries would lose the whole of the advantage which they previously gained by exchanging those commodities with one another. We suppose a duty which might diminish the consumption of the article, but which would not prevent us from continuing to import, as before, whatever linen we did consume.

The equilibrium of trade would be disturbed if the imposition of the tax diminished in the slightest degree the quantity of linen consumed. For, as the tax is levied at our own custom-house, the German exporter only receives the same price as formerly, though the English consumer pays a higher one. If, therefore, there be any diminution of the quantity bought, although a larger sum of money may be actually laid out in the article, a smaller one will be due from England to Germany : this sum will no longer be an equivalent for the sum due from Germany to England for cloth, the balance therefore must be paid in money. Prices will fall in Germany, and rise in England ; linen will fall in the German market ; cloth will rise in the English. The Germans will pay a higher price for cloth, and will have smaller money incomes to buy it with ; while the English will obtain linen cheaper, that is, its price will exceed what it previously was by less than the amount of the duty, while their means of purchasing it will be increased by the increase of their money incomes.

If the imposition of the tax does not diminish the demand, it will leave the trade exactly as it was before. We shall import as much, and export as much ; the whole of the tax will be paid out of our own pockets.

But the imposition of a tax on a commodity, almost always diminishes the demand more or less; and it can never, or scarcely ever increase the demand. It may, therefore, be laid down as a principle, that a tax on imported commodities, when it really operates as a tax, and not as a prohibition, either total or partial, almost always falls in part upon the foreigners who consume our goods: and that this is a mode in which a nation may be almost sure of appropriating to itself, at the expense of foreigners, a larger share than would otherwise belong to it of the increase in the general productiveness of the labour and capital of the world, which results from the interchange of commodities among nations.

It is scarcely necessary to observe, that no such advantage can result from the duty, if it operate as a protecting duty; if it induce the country which imposes it, to produce for herself that which she would otherwise have imported. The saving of labour—the increase in the general productiveness of the capital of the world—which is the effect of commerce, and which a non-protecting duty would enable the country imposing it to engross, could not be engrossed by a protecting duty, because such a duty prevents any such increased production from existing.

With a view to practical legislation, therefore, duties on importation may be divided into two classes: those which have the effect of encouraging some particular branch of domestic industry, and those which have not.

The former are purely mischievous, both to the country imposing them, and to those with whom it trades. They prevent a saving of labour and capital, which, if permitted to be made, would be divided in some proportion or other between the importing country and the countries which buy what that country does or might export.

The other class of duties are those which do not encourage one mode of procuring an article at the expense of

another, but allow interchange to take place just as if the duty did not exist—and to produce the saving of labour which constitutes the motive to international as to all other commerce. Of this kind, are duties on the importation of any commodity which could not by any possibility be produced at home; and duties not sufficiently high to counterbalance the difference of expense between the production of the article at home, and its importation. Of the money which is brought into the treasury of any country by taxes of this last description, a part only is paid by the people of that country; the remainder by the foreign consumers of their goods.

Nevertheless, this latter kind of taxes are in principle as ineligible as the former, although not precisely on the same ground. A protecting duty can never be a cause of gain, but always and necessarily of loss, to the country imposing it, just so far as it is efficacious to its end. A non-protecting duty on the contrary would, in most cases, be a source of gain to the country imposing it, in so far as throwing part of the weight of its taxes upon other people is a gain; but it would be a means of gain which it could seldom be advisable to adopt, being so easily counteracted by a precisely similar proceeding on the other side.

If England, in the case already supposed, sought to obtain for herself more than her natural share of the advantage of the trade with Germany, by imposing a duty upon cloth, Germany would only have to impose a duty upon linen, sufficient to diminish the demand for that article about as much as the demand for cloth had been diminished in England by the tax. Things would then be as before, and each country would pay its own tax. Unless, indeed, the sum of the two duties exceeded the entire advantage of the trade; for in that case the trade, and its advantage, would cease entirely.

There would be no advantage, therefore, in imposing

duties of this kind, with a view to gain by them, in the manner which has been pointed out. But so long as any other kind of taxes on commodities are retained, as a source of revenue, these may often be as unobjectionable as the rest. It is evident, moreover, that considerations of reciprocity, which are quite unessential when the matter in debate is a protecting duty, are of material importance when the repeal of duties of this other description is discussed. A country cannot be expected to renounce the power of taxing foreigners, unless foreigners will in return practise towards itself the same forbearance. The only mode in which a country can save itself from being a loser by the duties imposed by other countries on its commodities, is to impose corresponding duties on theirs. Only it must take care that these duties be not so high as to exceed all that remains of the advantage of the trade, and put an end to importation altogether; causing the article to be either produced at home, or imported from another and a dearer market.

It is not necessary to apply the principles which we have stated to the case of bounties on exportation or importation. The application is easy, and the conclusions present nothing of particular interest or importance.

6. Any cause which alters the exports or imports from one country into another, alters the division of the advantage of interchange between those two countries. Suppose the discovery of a new process, by which some article of export, or some article not previously exported, can be produced so cheap as to occasion a great demand for it in other countries. This of course produces a great influx of money from other countries, and lowers the prices of all articles imported from them, until the increase of importation produced by this cause has restored the equilibrium. Thus, the country which acquires a new article of export gets its imports cheaper. This is not a case of mere alteration

in the division of the advantage; it is a new advantage created by the discovery.

But suppose that the invention, to which the nation is indebted for this increase of the return to its industry, comes into use also in the other country, and that the process is one which can be as perfectly and as cheaply performed in the one country as in the other. The new exportation will cease; trade will revert to its old channels, the money which flowed in will again flow out, and the country which invented the process will lose that increase of its gain by trade, which it had derived from the discovery.

Now the exportation of machinery comes within the case which we have just described.

If the fact be, that by allowing to foreigners a participation in our machinery, we enable them to produce any of our leading articles of export, at a lower money price than we can sell those articles, it is certain that unless we possess as great an advantage in the production of the machinery itself as we have in the production of other articles by means of machinery, the permitting of its exportation would alter to our disadvantage the division of the benefit of trade. Our exports being diminished, we should have to pay a balance in money. This would raise, in foreign countries, the price of everything which we import from thence: while our incomes, being reduced in money value, would render us less able to buy those articles even if they had not risen. The equilibrium of exports and imports would only be restored, when either some of the latter became so dear that we could produce them cheaper at home, or some articles not previously exported became exportable from the fall of prices. In the one case, we lose the benefit of importation altogether, and are obliged to produce at home, at a greater cost. In the other case, we continue to import, but pay dearer for our imports.

Notwithstanding what has now been observed, restrictions on the exportation of machinery are not, in our opinion, justifiable, either on the score of international morality or of sound policy. It is evidently the common interest of all nations that each of them should abstain from every measure by which the aggregate wealth of the commercial world would be diminished, although of this smaller sum total it might thereby be enabled to attract to itself a larger share. And the time will certainly come when nations in general will feel the importance of this rule, and will so direct their approbation and disapprobation as to enforce observance of it. Moreover, a country possessing machines should consider that if a similar advantage were extended to other countries, they would employ it above all in the production of those articles, in which they had already the greatest natural advantages; and if the former country would be a loser by their improvements in the production of articles which it sells, it would gain by their improvements in those which it buys. The exportation of machinery may, however, be a proper subject for adjustment with other nations, on the principle of reciprocity. Until, by the common consent of nations, all restrictions upon trade are done away, a nation cannot be required to abolish those from which she derives a real advantage, without stipulating for an equivalent.

7. The case which we have just examined, is an example in how remarkable a manner every cause which materially influences exports, operates upon the prices of imports. According to the ancient theory of the balance of trade, and to the associations of the generality of what are termed practical men to this day, the sole benefit derived from commerce consists in the exports, and imports are rather an evil than otherwise. Political economists, seeing the folly of these views, and clearly perceiving that the advantage of commerce consists and must consist solely of the

imports, have occasionally suffered themselves to employ language evincing inattention to the fact, that exports, though unimportant in themselves, are important by their influence on imports. So real and extensive is this influence, that every new market which is opened for any of our goods, and every increase in the demand for our commodities in foreign countries, enables us to supply ourselves with foreign commodities at a smaller cost.

Let us revert to our earliest and simplest example, but which displays the real law of interchange more luminously than any formula into which money enters; the case of simple barter. We showed, that if at the rate of 10 yards of cloth for 17 of linen, the demand of Germany amounted to 1,000 times 10 yards of cloth, the two nations will trade together at that rate of interchange, provided that the linen required in England be exactly 1,000 times 17 yards, neither more nor less. For the cloth and the linen will then exactly pay for one another, and nobody on either side will be obliged to offer what he has to sell at a lower rate, in order to procure what he wants to buy.

Now if the increase of wealth and population in Germany should greatly increase the demand in that country for cloth, the demand for linen in England not increasing in the same ratio,—if, for instance, Germany became willing, at the above rate, to take 1,500 times 10 yards; is it not evident, that to induce England to take in exchange for this the only article which Germany by supposition has to give, the latter must offer it at a rate more advantageous to England—at 18, or perhaps 19 yards, for 10 of cloth? So that the division of the advantage becomes more and more favourable to a country, in proportion as the demand for its commodities increases in foreign countries.

It is not even necessary that the country which takes its goods, should supply it with any commodity whatever. Suppose that a country should be opened to our merchants,

disposed to buy from us in abundance, but which can sell to us scarcely anything, as every commodity which it affords could be got cheaper by us from some other quarter. Nevertheless, our trade with this country will enable us to obtain from all other countries their commodities at a lower price. At the first opening of this commerce of mere exportation, we must have received in payment a large quantity of money; for which our customer will have been indemnified by other countries, in exchange for her commodities. Prices must consequently be lower in all other countries, and higher with us, than before the opening of the new branch of trade; and we therefore obtain the commodities of other countries at a less cost, both as we pay less money for them, and as that money is lower in value.

8. Another obvious application of the same principle will enable us to explain, and to bring within the dominion of strict science, the rivalry of one exporting nation and another, or what is called, in the language of the mercantile system, *underselling*: a subject which political economists have taken little trouble to elucidate, from the habit before alluded to of disregarding almost entirely, in their purely scientific inquiries, those circumstances which affect the trade of a country by operating immediately upon the exports.

Let us revert to our old example, and to our old figures. Suppose that the trade between England and Germany in cloth and linen is established, and that the rate of interchange is 10 yards of cloth for 17 of linen. Now suppose that there arises in another country, in Flanders, for example, a linen manufacture; and that the same causes, the working of which in England and Germany has made 10 yards exchange for 17, would in England and Flanders, putting Germany out of the question, have made the rate of interchange 10 for 18. It is evident that Germany also

must give 18 yards of linen for 10 of cloth, and so carry on the trade with a diminished share of the advantage, or lose it altogether. If the play of demand in England and Flanders had made the rate of interchange not 10 for 18 but 10 for 21 (10 to 20 being in Germany the comparative cost of production), it is evident that Germany could not have maintained the competition, and would have lost, not part of her share of the advantage, but all advantage, and the trade itself.

It would be no answer to say, that Germany could probably have still found the means of importing cloth from England, by exporting something else. If she had purchased cloth with anything else, she would have purchased it dearer: as is proved by the fact, that having free choice, she found it most advantageous to purchase it with linen. When she could get 10 yards of cloth for 17 of linen, that was the mode in which she could get it with least labour. Being pressed by competition, she gave successfully $17\frac{1}{2}$, 18, $18\frac{1}{2}$; but rather than give 19 yards of linen, she perhaps would prefer to give, as costing her rather less labour, 10 yards of silk (which we will suppose to be the quantity which in England will purchase 10 yards of cloth). It is obvious that, although Germany has found the means of supplying herself with cloth, by exporting a different article from that in which she was undersold, yet the advantage of the trade between her and England is now shared in a proportion much less favourable to Germany.

There is no difficulty in showing that the same series of consequences takes place in exactly the same manner through the agency of money. The trade in cloth and linen between England and Germany being supposed to exist as before, Flanders produces linen at a lower price than that at which Germany has hitherto afforded it. The exportation from Germany is suspended; and Germany, continuing to import cloth, pays for it in money. By

so doing she lowers her own prices, and raises those in England: she has to pay more money for cloth, and to pay it in a currency of higher value. She thus suffers more and more as a consumer of cloth, until by the fall of her prices she can either afford to sell linen as cheap as Flanders, or to export some other commodity which she could not export before. In either case, her trade resumes its course, but with diminished advantage on her side.¹

It is in the mode just described, that those countries which formerly supplied Europe with manufactures, but

¹ The world at large, sellers and buyers taken together, is always a gainer by underselling. If, in the case supposed, England were compelled by a commercial treaty to exclude the linen of Flanders from her market, the total wealth of the world, if affected at all, would be diminished.

For, what is the cause which enables Flanders to undersell Germany? That Flanders, if she had the trade, would exchange linen for cloth at a rate of interchange more advantageous to England. And why can Flanders do so? It must be either because Flanders can produce the article with a less comparative quantity of labour than Germany, and therefore the total advantage to be divided between the two countries is greater in the case of Flanders than of Germany; or else because, though the total advantage is not greater, Flanders obtains a less share of it, her demand for cloth being greater, at the same rate of interchange, than that of Germany. In the former case, to exclude Flemish linen from England would be to prevent the world at large from making a greater saving of labour instead of a less. In the latter, the exclusion would be inefficacious for the only end it could be intended for, viz., the benefit of Germany, unless Flemish money were excluded from England as well as Flemish linen. For Flanders would buy English cloth, paying for it in money, until the fall of her prices enabled her to pay for it with something else: and the ultimate result would be that, by the rise of prices in England, Germany must pay a higher price for her cloth, and so lose a part of the advantage in spite of the treaty; while England would pay for German linen the same price indeed, but as the money incomes of her own people would be increased, the same money price would imply a smaller sacrifice.

which owed their power of doing so not to any natural and permanent advantages, but to their more advanced state of civilization as compared with other countries, have lost their pre-eminence as other countries successively attained an equal degree of civilization. Lombardy and Flanders, in the Middle Ages, produced some descriptions of clothing and ornament for all Europe: Holland, at a much later period, supplied ships, and almost all articles which came in ships, to most other parts of the world. All these countries have probably at this moment a much larger amount of capital than ever they had, but having been undersold by other countries, they have lost by far the greater part of the share which they had engrossed to themselves of the benefit which the world derives from commerce; and their capital yields to them in consequence a smaller proportional return. We are aware that other causes have contributed to the same effect, but we cannot doubt that this is a principal one.

As much as is really true of the great returns alleged to have been made to capital during the last war, must have arisen from a similar cause. Our exclusive command of the sea excluded from the market all by whom we should have been undersold.

The adoption by France, Russia, the Netherlands, and the United States, of a more severely restrictive commercial policy, subsequently to 1815, has done great injury undoubtedly to those countries; for the duties which they have established are intended to be, and really are, of the class termed *protecting*; that is to say, such as force the production of commodities by more costly processes at home, instead of suffering them to be imported from abroad. But these duties, though chiefly injurious to the countries imposing them, have also been highly injurious to England. By diminishing her exportation, or preventing it from increasing as it would otherwise have done, they have kept

up the prices of all imported commodities in England, above what those prices would have fallen to if trade had been left free.

By another obvious application of the same reasoning, it will be seen, that there is a real foundation for the notion, that a country may be benefited by receiving from another country the concession of what used to be termed commercial advantages, or by restraining its colonies from purchasing goods of any country except itself. In the figured illustration last used (p. 36), it is evident, that if England had been bound by a treaty with Germany to buy linen exclusively from her, Germany would have retained the trade which we supposed her to lose, and would have continued to purchase cloth at a comparatively cheap rate from England, instead of producing it by a more costly process at home. Suppose that England had been a colony of Germany, and we see that by compelling colonies to deal at her shop, she may obtain a real advantage, though of a nature which we may hazard the assertion that the founders of our colonial policy little dreamt of.

Such an advantage, however, being gained at the expense of another country, is, at the least, simply equivalent to a tax, or tribute. Now, if a country has just grounds, or deems superiority of power a sufficient ground, for exacting a tribute from another country, the most direct mode is the best. First, because it is the most intelligible, and has least of trick or disguise. Secondly, because it allows the people of the country paying the tribute, to raise the money in whatever way they consider least oppressive to themselves. Thirdly, because the indirect mode of taxing a country, by restrictions on its commerce, disturbs the distribution of industry most advantageous to the world at large, and occasions a greater loss to the restricted country, and to the other countries with which that country would have traded, than gain to the country

in whose favour the restrictions are imposed. And lastly, because a country never could obtain such privileges from an independent nation, and has seldom been so undisguised an oppressor as to demand them even from its colonies, without subjecting itself to restrictions in some degree equivalent, for the benefit of those whom it has thus taxed. Each country, therefore, usually pays tribute to the other; and to produce this fruitless reciprocity of exaction, the industry and trade of both countries are diverted from the most advantageous channels, and the return to the labour and capital of both is diminished, in pure loss.

9. The same principles which have led to the above conclusions, also suggest a remark of some importance with respect to the probable effect of a change from a restricted to a comparatively free trade.

There is no doubt that our prohibiting the importation of a particular article, which, but for the prohibition, would have been imported, enables us to obtain our other imports at smaller cost. The article for which we have the greatest demand, and for which our demand is most increased by cheapness, is that which we should naturally import preferably to any other; now of this article we should import the quantity necessary to pay for our exports, on terms of interchange less advantageous to us than in the case of any other commodity. If our legislature prohibits this commodity, the other country will be obliged to offer any other article on easier terms, in order to force a sufficient demand for it to be an equivalent to what she purchases from us.

The steps of the process, money being used, would be these:—We prohibit the importation of linen. The exportation of cloth continues, but is paid for in money. Our prices rise, those in Germany fall, until silk, or some other article, can be imported from Germany cheaper than it can be produced at home, and in sufficient abundance to

balance the export of cloth. Thus by sacrificing the cheapness of one commodity, we gain the cheapness of another: but we sacrifice a greater cheapness to gain a less, and we sacrifice cheapness in the article which we most want, and would import by preference, while our compensation is cheapness in an article which we either could produce more advantageously at home, or which we have so little desire for, that it requires a species of bounty on the article to create a demand.

Restrictions on importation do, however, tend to keep down the value and price of our remaining imports, and to keep up the nominal or money-prices of all our other commodities, by retaining a greater quantity of money in the country than would otherwise be there. From this it obviously follows, that if the restrictions were removed, we should have to pay rather more for some of the articles which we now import, while those which we are now prevented from importing would cost us more than might be inferred from their *present* price in the foreign market. And general prices would fall; to the benefit of those who have fixed sums to receive; to the disadvantage of those who have fixed sums to pay; and giving rise, as a general fall of prices always does, to an appearance, though a temporary and fallacious one, of general distress.¹

It is right to observe that the measures of the British Legislature which have been falsely characterized as measures of free trade, must, from their extremely insignificant extent, have produced far too little effect in

¹ This last possible effect of a sudden introduction of free trade, was pointed out in an able article on the Silk Question, in a work of too short duration, the "Parliamentary Review." [The full title of this was "The Parliamentary and Historical Review." It was started by Bentham in 1825, and continued for about three years. Charles Austin was the editor, and Mill, then still "in his teens," was one of the chief contributors. The first article in the first number is by Mill.—ED.]

increasing our importation, to have actually led, in any degree worth mentioning, to the results specified above.

It is of greater importance to take notice, that these effects may be entirely obviated, if foreign countries can be prevailed upon simultaneously to relax their restrictive systems, so as to create an immediate increase of demand for our exports at the present prices. It is true that exports and imports must, in the end, balance one another, and if we increase our imports, our exports will of necessity increase too. But it is a forced increase, produced by an efflux of money and fall of prices; and this fall of prices being permanent, although it would be no evil at all in a country where credit is unknown, it may be a very serious one where large classes of persons, and the nation itself, are under engagements to pay fixed sums of money of large amount.

10. The only remaining application of the principle set forth in this essay, which we think it of importance to notice specially, is the effect produced upon a country by the annual payment of a tribute or subsidy to a foreign power, or by the annual remittance of rents to absentee landlords, or of any other kind of income to its absent owners. Remittances to absentees are often very incorrectly likened in their general character to the payment of a tribute; from which they differ in this very material circumstance, that tribute, if not paid to a foreign country, is not paid at all, whereas rents are paid to landlord, and consumed by him, even if he resides at home. The two kinds of payment, however, have a perfect resemblance to each other in such parts of their effects as we are about to point out.

The tribute, subsidy, or remittance, is always in goods; for, unless the country possesses mines of the precious metals, and numbers those metals among its regular articles of export, it cannot go on, year after year, parting

with them, and never receiving them back. When a nation has regular payments to make in a foreign country, for which it is not to receive any return, its exports must annually exceed its imports by the amount of the payments which it is bound so to make. In order to force a demand for its exports greater than its imports will suffice to pay for, it must offer them at a rate of interchange more favourable to the foreign country, and less so to itself, than if it had no payments to make beyond the value of its imports. It therefore carries on the trade with less advantage, in consequence of the obligations to which it is subject towards persons resident in foreign countries.

The steps of the process are these. The exports and imports being in equilibrium, suppose a treaty to be concluded, by which the country binds itself to pay in tribute to another country, a certain sum annually. It makes, perhaps, the first payment by a remittance of money. This lowers prices in the paying country, and raises them in the receiving one: the exports of the tributary country increase, its imports diminish. When the efflux of money has altered prices in the requisite degree, the exports exceed the imports annually, by the amount of the tribute; and the latter, being added to the sum of the payments due, restores the balance of payments between the two countries. The result to the tributary country is a diminution of her share in the advantage of foreign trade. She pays dearer for her imports, in two ways, because she pays more money, and because that money is of higher value, the money incomes of her inhabitants being of smaller amount.

Thus the imposition of a tribute is a double burthen to the country paying it, and a double gain to that which receives it. The tributary country pays to the other, first, the tax, whatever be its amount, and next, something more, which the one country loses in the increased cost of

its imports, the other gains in the diminished cost of its own.

Absenteeism, moreover, though not burthensome in the former of these ways, since the money is paid whether the receiver be an absentee or not, is yet disadvantageous in the second of the two modes which have been mentioned. Ireland pays dearer for her imports in consequence of her absentees; a circumstance which the assailants of Mr. M'Culloch, whether political economists or not, have not, we believe, hitherto thought of producing against him.

11. If the question be now asked, which of the countries of the world gains most by foreign commerce, the following will be the answer.

If by gain be meant advantage, in the most enlarged sense, that country will generally gain the most, which stands most in need of foreign commodities.

But if by gain be meant saving of labour and capital in obtaining the commodities which the country desires to have, whatever they may be; the country will gain, not in proportion to its own need of foreign articles, but to the need which foreigners have of the articles which itself produces.

Let us take, as an illustration of our meaning, the case of France and England. Those two nations, in consequence of the restrictions with which they have loaded their commercial intercourse, carry on so little trade with each other, as may almost, regard being had to the wealth and population of the two countries, be called none at all. If these fetters were at once taken off, which of the two countries would be the greatest gainer? England without doubt. There would instantly arise in France an immense demand for the cottons, woollens, and iron of England; while wines, brandies, and silks, the staple articles of France, are less likely to come into general demand here, nor would the consumption of such productions, it is

probable, be so rapidly increased by the fall of price. The fall would probably be very great before France could obtain a vent in England for so much of her exports as would suffice to pay for the probable amount of her imports. There would be a considerable flow of the precious metals out of France into England. The English consumer of French wine would not merely save the amount of the duty which that wine now pays, but would find the wine itself falling in prime cost, while his means of purchasing it would be increased by the augmentation of his own money income. The French consumer of English cottons, on the contrary, would not long continue to be able to purchase them at the price they now sell for in England. He would gain less, as the English would gain more, than might appear from a mere comparison between the present prices of commodities in the two countries.

Various consequences would flow from opening the trade between France and England, which are not expected, either by the friends or by the opponents of the present restrictive system. The wine-growers of France, who imagine that free trade would relieve their distress by raising the price of their wine, might not improbably find that price actually lowered. On the other hand, our silk manufacturers would be surprised if they were told that the free admission of our cottons and hardware into the French market, would endanger *their* branch of manufacture: yet such might very possibly be the effect. France, it is likely, could most advantageously pay us in silks for a portion of the large amount of cottons and hardware which we should sell to her; and though our silk manufacturers may now be able to compete advantageously, in some branches of the manufacture, with their French rivals, it by no means follows that they could do so when the efflux of money from France, and its influx into

England, had lowered the price of silk goods in the French market, and increased all the expenses of production here.

On the whole, England probably, of all the countries of Europe, draws to herself the largest share of the gains of international commerce: because her exportable articles are in universal demand, and are of such a kind that the demand increases rapidly as the price falls. Countries which export food, have the former advantage, but not the latter. But our own colonies, and the countries which supply us with the materials of our manufactures, maintain a hard struggle with us for an equal share of the advantages of their trade; for *their* exports are also of a kind for which there exists a most extensive demand here, and a demand capable of almost indefinite extension by a fall of price. Contrary, therefore, to common opinion, it is probable that our trade with the colonies, and with the countries which send us the raw materials of our national industry, is not more but less advantageous to us, in proportion to its extent, than our trade with the continent of Europe. We mean in respect to the mere amount of the return to the labour and capital of the country; considered abstractedly from the usefulness or agreeableness of the particular articles on which the receivers may choose to expend it.¹

¹ Mill says of this essay, in his "Autobiography" (p. 121): "The theories of International Values and of Profits were excogitated and worked out in about equal portions by myself and Graham; . . . but when my exposition came to be written, I found that I had so over-estimated my agreement with him . . . on International Values, that I was obliged to consider them as now exclusively mine."—ED.

ESSAY II.

OF THE INFLUENCE OF CONSUMPTION ON PRODUCTION.

BEFORE the appearance of those great writers whose discoveries have given to political economy its present comparatively scientific character, the ideas universally entertained both by theorists and by practical men, on the causes of national wealth, were grounded upon certain general views, which almost all who have given any considerable attention to the subject now justly hold to be completely erroneous.

Among the mistakes which were most pernicious in their direct consequences, and tended in the greatest degree to prevent a just conception of the objects of the science, or of the test to be applied to the solution of the questions which it presents, was the immense importance attached to consumption. The great end of legislation in matters of national wealth, according to the prevalent opinion, was to create consumers. A great and rapid consumption was what the producers, of all classes and denominations, wanted, to enrich themselves and the country. This object, under varying names of an extensive demand, a brisk circulation, a great expenditure of money, and sometimes *totidem verbis* a large consumption, was conceived to be the great condition of prosperity.

It is not necessary, in the present state of the science, to

contest this doctrine in the most flagrantly absurd of its forms or of its applications. The utility of a large government expenditure, for the purpose of encouraging industry, is no longer maintained. Taxes are not now esteemed to be "like the dews of heaven, which return again in prolific showers." It is no longer supposed that you benefit the producer by taking his money, provided you give it to him again in exchange for his goods. There is nothing which impresses a person of reflection with a stronger sense of the shallowness of the political reasonings of the last two centuries, than the general reception so long given to a doctrine which, if it proves anything, proves that the more you take from the pockets of the people to spend on your own pleasures, the richer they grow; that the man who steals money out of a shop, provided he expends it all again at the same shop, is a benefactor to the tradesman whom he robs, and that the same operation, repeated sufficiently often, would make the tradesman's fortune.

In opposition to these palpable absurdities, it was triumphantly established by political economists, that consumption never needs encouragement. All which is produced is already consumed, either for the purpose of reproduction or of enjoyment. The person who saves his income is no less a consumer than he who spends it: he consumes it in a different way; it supplies food and clothing to be consumed, tools and materials to be used, by productive labourers. Consumption, therefore, already takes place to the greatest extent which the amount of production admits of; but, of the two kinds of consumption, reproductive and unproductive, the former alone adds to the national wealth, the latter impairs it. What is consumed for mere enjoyment, is gone; what is consumed for reproduction, leaves commodities of equal value, commonly with the addition of a profit. The usual effect of the attempts of government to encourage consumption, is merely to prevent saving;

that is, to promote unproductive consumption at the expense of reproductive, and diminish the national wealth by the very means which were intended to increase it.

What a country wants to make it richer, is never consumption, but production. Where there is the latter, we may be sure that there is no want of the former. To produce, implies that the producer desires to consume; why else should he give himself useless labour? He may not wish to consume what he himself produces, but his motive for producing and selling is the desire to buy. Therefore, if the producers generally produce and sell more and more, they certainly also buy more and more. Each may not want more of what he himself produces, but each wants more of what some other produces; and, by producing what the other wants, hopes to obtain what the other produces. There will never, therefore, be a greater quantity produced, of commodities in general, than there are consumers for. But there may be, and always are, abundance of persons who have the inclination to become consumers of some commodity, but are unable to satisfy their wish, because they have not the means of producing either that, or anything to give in exchange for it. The legislator, therefore, needs not give himself any concern about consumption. There will always be consumption for everything which can be produced, until the wants of all who possess the means of producing are completely satisfied, and then production will not increase any farther. The legislator has to look solely to two points: that no obstacle shall exist to prevent those who have the means of producing, from employing those means as they find most for their interest; and that those who have not at present the means of producing, to the extent of their desire to consume, shall have every facility afforded to their acquiring the means, that, becoming producers, they may be enabled to consume.

These general principles are now well understood by almost all who profess to have studied the subject, and are disputed by few except those who ostentatiously proclaim their contempt for such studies. We touch upon the question, not in the hope of rendering these fundamental truths clearer than they already are, but to perform a task, so useful and needful, that it is to be wished it were oftener deemed part of the business of those who direct their assaults against ancient prejudices,—that of seeing that no scattered particles of important truth are buried and lost in the ruins of exploded error. Every prejudice, which has long and extensively prevailed among the educated and intelligent, must certainly be borne out by some strong appearance of evidence; and when it is found that the evidence does not prove the received conclusion, it is of the highest importance to see what it does prove. If this be thought not worth inquiring into, an error conformable to appearances is often merely exchanged for an error contrary to appearances; while, even if the result be truth, it is paradoxical truth, and will have difficulty in obtaining credence while the false appearances remain.

Let us therefore inquire into the nature of the appearances, which gave rise to the belief that a great demand, a brisk circulation, a rapid consumption (three equivalent expressions), are a cause of national prosperity.

If every man produced for himself, or with his capital employed others to produce, everything which he required, customers and their wants would be a matter of profound indifference to him. He would be rich, if he had produced and stored up a large supply of the articles which he was likely to require; and poor, if he had stored up none at all, or not enough to last until he could produce more.

The case, however, is different after the separation of

employments. In civilized society, a single producer confines himself to the production of one commodity, or a small number of commodities; and his affluence depends, not solely upon the quantity of his commodity which he has produced and laid in store, but upon his success in finding purchasers for that commodity.

It is true, therefore, of every particular producer or dealer, that a great demand, a brisk circulation, a rapid consumption, of the commodities which he sells at his shop or produces in his manufactory, is important to him. The dealer whose shop is crowded with customers, who can dispose of a product almost the very moment it is completed, makes large profits, while his next neighbour, with an equal capital but fewer customers, gains comparatively little.

It was natural that, in this case, as in a hundred others, the analogy of an individual should be unduly applied to a nation: as it has been concluded that a nation generally gains in wealth by the conquest of a province, because an individual frequently does so by the acquisition of an estate; and as, because an individual estimates his riches by the quantity of money which he can command, it was long deemed an excellent contrivance for enriching a country, to heap up artificially the greatest possible quantity of the precious metals within it.

Let us examine, then, more closely than has usually been done, the case from which the misleading analogy is drawn. Let us ascertain to what extent the two cases actually resemble; what is the explanation of the false appearance, and the real nature of the phenomenon which, being seen indistinctly, has led to a false conclusion.

We shall propose for examination a very simple case, but the explanation of which will suffice to clear up all other cases which fall within the same principle. Suppose that

a number of foreigners with large incomes arrive in a country, and there expend those incomes: will this operation be beneficial, as respects the national wealth, to the country which receives these immigrants? Yes, say many political economists, if they save any part of their incomes, and employ them reproductively; because then an addition is made to the national capital, and the produce is a clear increase of the national wealth. But if the foreigner expends all his income unproductively, it is no benefit to the country, say they, and for the following reason.

If the foreigner had his income remitted to him in bread and beef, coats and shoes, and all the other articles which he was desirous to consume, it would not be pretended that his eating, drinking, and wearing them, on our shores rather than on his own, could be of any advantage to us in point of wealth. Now, the case is not different if his income is remitted to him in some one commodity, as, for instance, in money. For whatever takes place afterwards, with a view to the supply of his wants, is a mere exchange of equivalents; and it is impossible that a person should ever be enriched by merely receiving an equal value in exchange for an equal value.

When it is said that the purchases of the foreign consumer give employment to capital which would otherwise yield no profit to its owner, the same political economists reject this proposition as involving the fallacy of what has been called a "general glut." They say, that the capital, which any person has chosen to produce and to accumulate, can always find employment, since the fact that he has accumulated it proves that he had an unsatisfied desire; and if he cannot find anything to produce for the wants of other consumers, he can for his own.

It is impossible to contest these propositions as thus stated. But there is one consideration which clearly shows, that there is something more in the matter than

is here taken into the account ; and this is, that the above reasoning tends distinctly to prove, that it does a tradesman no good to go into his shop and buy his goods. How can he be enriched ? it might be asked. He merely receives a certain value in money, for an equivalent value in goods. Neither does this give employment to his capital ; for there never exists more capital than can find employment, and if one person does not buy his goods another will ; or if nobody does, there is over-production in that business, he can remove his capital, and find employment for it in another trade. .

Everyone sees the fallacy of this reasoning as applied to individual producers. Everyone knows that as applied to them it has not even the semblance of plausibility ; that the wealth of a producer does in a great measure depend upon the number of his customers, and that in general every additional purchaser does really add to his profits. If the reasoning, which would be so absurd if applied to individuals, be applicable to nations, the principle on which it rests must require much explanation and elucidation.

Let us endeavour to analyze with precision the real nature of the advantage which a producer derives from an addition to the number of his customers.

For this purpose, it is necessary that we should premise a single observation on the meaning of the word capital. It is usually defined, the food, clothing, and other articles set aside for the consumption of the labourer, together with the materials and instruments of production. This definition appears to us peculiarly liable to misapprehension ; and much vagueness and some narrow views have, we conceive, occasionally resulted from its being interpreted with too mechanical an adherence to the literal meaning of the words.

The capital, whether of an individual or of a nation, consists, we apprehend, of all matters possessing exchange-

able value, which the individual or the nation has in his or in its possession for the purpose of reproduction, and not for the purpose of the owner's unproductive enjoyment. All unsold goods, therefore, constitute a part of the national capital, and of the capital of the producer or dealer to whom they belong. It is true that tools, materials, and the articles on which the labourer is supported, are the only articles which are directly subservient to production : and if I have a capital consisting of money, or of goods in a warehouse, I can only employ them as means of production in so far as they are capable of being exchanged for the articles which conduce directly to that end. But the food, machinery, etc., which will ultimately be purchased with the goods in my warehouse, may at this moment not be in the country, may not be even in existence. If, after having sold the goods, I hire labourers with the money, and set them to work, I am surely employing capital, though the corn, which in the form of bread those labourers may buy with the money, may be now in warehouse at Dantzic, or perhaps not yet above ground.

Whatever, therefore, is destined to be employed reproductively, either in its existing shape, or indirectly by a previous (or even subsequent) exchange, is capital. Suppose that I have laid out all the money I possess in wages and tools, and that the article I produce is just completed : in the interval which elapses before I can sell the article, realize the proceeds, and lay them out again in wages and tools, will it be said that I have no capital? Certainly not : I have the same capital as before, perhaps a greater, but it is locked up, as the expression is, and not disposable.

When we have thus seen accurately what really constitutes capital, it becomes obvious, that of the capital of a country, there is at all times a very large proportion lying idle. The annual produce of a country is never anything

approaching in magnitude to what it might be if all the resources devoted to reproduction, if all the capital, in short, of the country, were in full employment.

If every commodity on an average remained unsold for a length of time equal to that required for its production, it is obvious that, at any one time, no more than half the productive capital of the country would be really performing the functions of capital. The two halves would relieve one another, like the semichori in a Greek tragedy; or rather the half which was in employment would be a fluctuating portion, composed of varying parts; but the result would be, that each producer would be able to produce every year only half as large a supply of commodities, as he could produce if he were sure of selling them the moment the production was completed.

This, or something like it, is, however the habitual state, at every instant, of a very large proportion of all the capitalists in the world.

The number of producers, or dealers, who turn over their capital, as the expression is, in the shortest possible time, is very small. There are few who have so rapid a sale for their wares, that all the goods which their own capital, or the capital which they can borrow, enables them to supply, are carried off as fast as they can be supplied. The majority have not an *extent of business*, at all adequate to the amount of the capital they dispose of. It is true that, in the communities in which industry and commerce are practised with greatest success, the contrivances of banking enable the possessor of a larger capital than he can employ in his own business, to employ it productively and derive a revenue from it notwithstanding. Yet even then, there is, of necessity, a great quantity of capital which remains fixed in the shape of implements, machinery, buildings, etc., whether it is only half employed, or in complete employment: and every dealer keeps a stock

in trade, to be ready for a possible sudden demand, though he probably may not be able to dispose of it for an indefinite period.

This perpetual non-employment of a large proportion of capital, is the price we pay for the division of labour. The purchase is worth what it costs; but the price is considerable.

Of the importance of the fact which has just been noticed there are three signal proofs. One is, the large sum often given for the goodwill of a particular business. Another is, the large rent which is paid for shops in certain situations, near a great thoroughfare for example, which have no advantage except that the occupier may expect a larger body of customers, and be enabled to turn over his capital more quickly. Another is, that in many trades, there are some dealers who sell articles of an equal quality at a lower price than other dealers. Of course, this is not a voluntary sacrifice of profits: they expect by the consequent overflow of customers to turn over their capital more quickly, and to be gainers by keeping the whole of their capital in more constant employment, though on any given operation their gains are less.

The reasoning cited in the earlier part of this paper, to show the uselessness of a mere purchaser or customer, for enriching a nation or an individual, applies only to the case of dealers who have already as much business as their capital admits of, and as rapid a sale for their commodities as is possible. To such dealers an additional purchaser is really of no use; for, if they are sure of selling all their commodities the moment those commodities are on sale, it is of no consequence whether they sell them to one person or to another. But it is questionable whether there be any dealers in whose case this hypothesis is exactly verified; and to the great majority it is not applicable at all. An additional customer, to most dealers,

is equivalent to an increase of their productive capital. He enables them to convert a portion of their capital which was lying idle (and which could never have become productive in their hands until a customer was found) into wages and instruments of production ; and if we suppose that the commodity, unless bought by him, would not have found a purchaser for a year after, then all which a capital of that value can enable men to produce during a year, is clear gain—gain to the dealer, or producer, and to the labourers whom he will employ, and thus (if no one sustains any corresponding loss) gain to the nation. The aggregate produce of the country for the succeeding year is, therefore, increased ; not by the mere exchange, but by calling into activity a portion of the national capital, which, had it not been for the exchange, would have remained for some time longer unemployed.

Thus there are actually at all times producers and dealers, of all, or nearly all classes, whose capital is lying partially idle, because they have not found the means of fulfilling the condition which the division of labour renders indispensable to the full employment of capital,—viz., that of exchanging their products with each other. If these persons could find one another out, they could mutually relieve each other from this disadvantage. Any two shopkeepers, in insufficient employment, who agree to deal at each other's shops so long as they could there purchase articles of as good a quality as elsewhere, and at as low a price, would render the nation a service. It may be said that they must previously have dealt, to the same amount, with some other dealers ; but this is erroneous, since they could only have obtained the means of purchasing by being previously enabled to sell. By their compact, each would gain a customer, who would call his capital into fuller employment ; each therefore would obtain an increased produce ; and they would thus be enabled to

become better customers to each other than they could be to third parties.

It is obvious that every dealer who has not business sufficient fully to employ his capital (which is the case with all dealers when they commence business, and with many to the end of their lives), is in this predicament simply for want of some one with whom to exchange his commodities; and as there are such persons to about the same degree probably in all trades, it is evident that if these persons sought one another out, they have their remedy in their own hands, and by each other's assistance might bring their capital into more full employment.

We are now qualified to define the exact nature of the benefit which a producer or dealer derives from the acquisition of a new customer. It is as follows:

1. If any part of his own capital was locked up in the form of unsold goods, producing (for a longer period or a shorter) nothing at all; a portion of this is called into greater activity, and becomes more constantly productive. But to this we must add some further advantages.

2. If the additional demand exceeds what can be supplied by setting at liberty the capital which exists in the state of unsold goods; and if the dealer has additional resources, which were productively invested (in the public funds, for instance), but not in his own trade; he is enabled to obtain, on a portion of these, not mere interest, but profit, and so to gain that difference between the rate of profit and the rate of interest, which may be considered as "wages of superintendence."

3. If all the dealer's capital is employed in his own trade, and no part of it locked up as unsold goods, the new demand affords him additional encouragement to save, by enabling his savings to yield him not merely interest, but profit; and if he does not choose to save (or until he shall have saved), it enables him to carry on an additional

business with borrowed capital, and so gain the difference between interest and profit, or, in other words, to receive wages of superintendence on a larger amount of capital.

This, it will be found, is a complete account of all the gains which a dealer in any commodity can derive from an accession to the number of those who deal with him: and it is evident to everyone, that these advantages are real and important, and that they are the cause which induces a dealer of any kind to desire an increase of his business.

It follows from these premises, that the arrival of a new unproductive consumer (living on his own means) in any place, be that place a village, a town, or an entire country, is beneficial to that place, if it causes to any of the dealers of the place any of the advantages above enumerated, without withdrawing an equal advantage of the same kind from any other dealer of the same place.

This accordingly is the test by which we must try all such questions, and by which the propriety of the analogical argument, from dealing with a tradesmen to dealing with a nation, must be decided.

Let us take, for instance, as our example, Paris, which is much frequented by strangers from various parts of the world, who, as sojourners there, live unproductively upon their means. Let us consider whether the presence of these persons is beneficial, in an *industrial* point of view, to Paris.

We exclude from the consideration that portion of the strangers' incomes which they pay to natives as direct remuneration for service, or labour of any description. This is obviously beneficial to the country. An increase in the funds expended in employing labour, whether that labour be productive or unproductive, tends equally to raise wages. The condition of the whole labouring class is, so far, benefited. It is true that the labourers thus

employed by sojourners are probably, in part or altogether, withdrawn from productive employment. But this is far from being an evil; for either the situation of the labouring class is improved, which is far more than an equivalent for a diminution in mere production, or the rise of wages acts as a stimulus to population, and then the number of productive labourers becomes as great as before.

To this we may add, that what the sojourners pay as wages of labour or service (whether constant or casual), though expended unproductively by the first possessor, may, when it passes into the hands of the receivers, be by them saved, and invested in a productive employment. If so, a direct addition is made to the national capital.

All this is obvious, and is sufficiently allowed by political economists; who have invariably set apart the gains of all persons coming under the class of domestic servants, as real advantages arising to a place from the residence there of an increased number of unproductive consumers.

We have only to examine whether the purchases of commodities by these unproductive consumers, confer the same kind of benefit upon the village, town, or nation, which is bestowed upon a particular tradesmen by dealing at his shop.

Now it is obvious that the sojourners, on their arrival, confer the benefit in question upon some dealers, who did not enjoy it before. They purchase their food, and many other articles, from the dealers in the place. They, therefore, call the capital of some dealers, which was locked up in unsold goods, into more active employment. They encourage them to save, and enable them to receive wages of superintendence upon a larger amount of capital. These effects being undeniable, the question is, whether the presence of the sojourners deprives any others of the Paris dealers of a similar advantage.

It will be seen that it does; and nothing will then remain but a comparison of the amounts.

It is obvious to all who reflect (and was shown in the paper which preceeds this) that the remittances to persons who expend their incomes in foreign countries are, after a slight passage of the precious metals, defrayed in commodities: and that the result commonly is, an increase of exports and a diminution of imports, until the latter fall short of the former by the amount of the remittances.

The arrival, therefore, of the strangers (say from England), while it creates at Paris a market for commodities equivalent in value to their funds, displaces in the market other commodities to an equal value. To the extent of the increase of exports from England into France in the way of remittance, it introduces additional commodities which, by their cheapness, displace others formerly produced in that country. To the extent of the diminution of imports into England from France, commodities which existed or which were habitually produced in that country are deprived of a market, or can only find one at a price not sufficient to defray the cost.

It must, therefore, be a matter of mere accident, if by arriving in a place, the new unproductive consumer causes any net advantage to its industry, of the kind which we are now examining. Not to mention that this, like any other change in the channels of trade, may render useless a portion of fixed capital, and so far injure the national wealth.

A distinction, however, must here be made.

The place to which the new unproductive consumers have come, may be a town or village, as well as a country. If a town or village, it may either be or not be a place having an export trade.

If the place had no previous trade except with the immediate neighbourhood, there are no exports and imports,

by the new arrangement of which, the remittance can be made. There is no capital, formerly employed in manufacturing for the foreign market, which is now brought into less full employment.

Yet the remittance evidently is still made in commodities, but in this case without displacing any which were produced before. To show this, it is necessary to make the following remarks.

The reason why towns exist, is that *ceteris paribus* it is convenient, in order to save cost of carriage, that the production of commodities should take place as far as practicable in the immediate vicinity of the consumer. Capital finds its way so easily from town to country and from country to town, that the amount of capital in the town will be regulated wholly by the amount which can be employed there more conveniently than elsewhere. Consequently the capital of a place will be such as is sufficient.

1st. To produce all commodities which from local circumstances can be produced there at less cost than elsewhere: and if this be the case to any great extent, it will be an exporting town. When we say *produced*, we may add, or *stored*.

2nd. To produce and retail the commodities which are consumed by the inhabitants of the town, and the place of whose production is in other respects a matter of indifference. To the inhabitants of the town must be added such dwellers in the adjoining country, as are nearer to that place than to any other equally well furnished market.

Now, if new unproductive consumers resort to the place, it is clear that for the latter of these two purposes, more capital will be required than before. Consequently, if less is not required for the former purpose, more capital will establish itself at the place.

Until this additional capital has arrived, the producers

and dealers already on the spot will enjoy great advantages. Every particle of their own capital will be called into the most active employment. What their capital does not enable them to supply, will be got from others at a distance, who cannot supply it on such favourable terms ; consequently they will be in the predicament of possessing a partial monopoly—receiving for everything a price regulated by a higher cost of production than they are compelled to pay. They also, being in possession of the market, will be enabled to make a large portion of the new capital pass through their hands, and thus to earn wages of superintendence upon it.

If, indeed, the place from whence the strangers came, previously traded with that where they have taken up their abode, the effect of their arrival is, that the exports of the town will diminish, and that it will be supplied from abroad with something which it previously produced at home. In this way an amount of capital will be set free equal to that required, and there will be no increase on the whole. The removal of the court from London to Birmingham would not necessarily, though it would probably,¹ increase the amount of capital in the latter place. The afflux of money to Birmingham, and its efflux from London, would render it cheaper to make some articles in London for Birmingham consumption ; and to make others in London for home consumption, which were formerly brought from Birmingham.

But instead of Birmingham, an exporting town, suppose a village, or a town which only produced and retailed for

¹ Probably ; because most articles of an ornamental description being still required from the same makers, these makers, with their capital, would probably follow their customers. Besides, from place to place within the same country, most persons will rather change their habitation than their employment. But the moving on this score would be reciprocal.

itself and its immediate vicinity. The remittances must come either in the shape of money; and though the money would not remain, but would be sent away in exchange for commodities, it would, however, first pass through the hands of the producers and dealers in the place, and would by them be exported in exchange for the articles which they require—viz., the materials, tools, and subsistence necessary for the increased production now required of them, and articles of foreign luxury for their own increased unproductive consumption. These articles would not displace any formerly made in the place, but on the contrary, would forward the production of more.

Hence we may consider the following propositions as established :

1. The expenditure of absentees (the case of domestic servants excepted), is not necessarily any loss to the *country* which they leave, or gain to the *country* which they resort to (save in the manner shown in Essay I.): for almost every *country* habitually exports and imports to a much greater value than the incomes of its absentees, or of the foreign sojourners within it.

2. But sojourners often do much good to the *town* or village which they resort to, and absentees harm to that which they leave. The capital of the petty tradesman in a small town near an absentee's estate, is deprived of the market for which it is conveniently situated, and must resort to another to which other capitals lie nearer, and where it is consequently outbid, and gains less ; obtaining only the same price, with greater expenses. But this evil would be equally occasioned, if, instead of going abroad, the absentee had removed to his own capital city.

If the tradesman could, in the latter case, remove to the metropolis, or in the former, employ himself in producing increased exports, or in producing for home consumption

articles now no longer imported, each in the place most convenient for that operation ; he would not be a loser, though the place which he was obliged to leave might be said to lose.

Paris undoubtedly gains much by the sojourn of foreigners, while the counteracting loss by diminution of exports from France is suffered by the great trading and manufacturing towns, Rouen, Bordeaux, Lyons, etc., which also suffer the principal part of the loss by importation of articles previously produced at home. The capital thus set free, finds its most convenient seat to be Paris, since the business to which it must turn is the production of articles to be unproductively consumed by the sojourners.

The great trading towns of France would undoubtedly be more flourishing, if France were not frequented by foreigners.

Rome and Naples are perhaps purely benefited by the foreigners sojourning there: for they have so little external trade, that their case may resemble that of the village in our hypothesis.

Absenteeism, therefore (except as shown in the first Essay), is a local, not a national evil; and the resort of foreigners, in so far as they purchase for unproductive consumption, is not, in any commercial country, a national, though it may be a local good.

From the considerations which we have now adduced, it is obvious what is meant by such phrases as a *brisk demand*, and a rapid circulation. There is a brisk demand and a rapid circulation, when goods, generally speaking, are sold as fast as they can be produced. There is slackness, on the contrary, and stagnation, when goods, which have been produced, remain for a long time unsold. In the former case, the capital which has been locked up in production is disengaged as soon as the production is completed ; and can be immediately employed in further production. In

the latter case, a large portion of the productive capital of the country is lying in temporary inactivity.

From what has been already said, it is obvious that periods of "brisk demand" are also the periods of greatest production: the national capital is never called into full employment but at those periods. This, however, is no reason for desiring such times; it is not desirable that the whole capital of the country should be in full employment. For, the calculations of producers and traders being of necessity imperfect, there are always some commodities which are more or less in excess, as there are always some which are in deficiency. If, therefore, the whole truth were known, there would always be some classes of producers contracting, not extending, their operations. If *all* are endeavouring to extend them, it is a certain proof that some general delusion is afloat. The commonest cause of such delusion is some general, or very extensive, rise of prices (whether caused by speculation or by the currency) which persuades all dealers that they are growing rich. And hence, an increase of production really takes place during the progress of depreciation, as long as the existence of depreciation is not suspected; and it is this which gives to the fallacies of the currency school, principally represented by Mr. Attwood, all the little plausibility they possess. But when the delusion vanishes and the truth is disclosed, those whose commodities are relatively in excess must diminish their production or be ruined: and if during the high prices they have built mills and erected machinery, they will be likely to repent at leisure.

In the present state of the commercial world, mercantile transactions being carried on upon an immense scale, but the remote causes of fluctuations in prices being very little understood, so that unreasonable hopes and unreasonable fears alternately rule with tyrannical sway over the minds of a majority of the mercantile public; general eagerness

to buy and general reluctance to buy, succeed one another in a manner more or less marked, at brief intervals. Except during short periods of transition, there is almost always either great briskness of business or great stagnation; either the principal producers of almost all the leading articles of industry have as many orders as they can possibly execute, or the dealers in almost all commodities have their warehouses full of unsold goods.

In this last case, it is commonly said that there is a general superabundance; and as those economists who have contested the possibility of general superabundance, would none of them deny the possibility or even the frequent occurrence of the phenomenon which we have just noticed, it would seem incumbent on them to show, that the expression to which they object is not applicable to a state of things in which all or most commodities remain unsold, in the same sense in which there is said to be a superabundance of any one commodity when it remains in the warehouses of dealers for want of a market.

This is merely a question of naming, but an important one, as it seems to us that much apparent difference of opinion has been produced by a mere difference in the mode of describing the same facts, and that persons who at bottom were perfectly agreed, have considered each other as guilty of gross error, and sometimes even misrepresentation, on this subject.

In order to afford the explanations with which it is necessary to take the doctrine of the impossibility of an excess of all commodities, we must advert for a moment to the argument by which this impossibility is commonly maintained.

There can never, it is said, be a want of buyers for all commodities; because whoever offers a commodity for sale, desires to obtain a commodity in exchange for it, and

is therefore a buyer by the mere fact of his being a seller. The sellers and the buyers, for all commodities taken together, must, by the metaphysical necessity of the case, be an exact equipoise to each other; and if there be more sellers than buyers of one thing, there must be more buyers than sellers for another.

This argument is evidently founded on the supposition of a state of barter; and, on that supposition, it is perfectly incontestable. When two persons perform an act of barter, each of them is at once a seller and a buyer. He cannot sell without buying. Unless he chooses to buy some other person's commodity, he does not sell his own.

If, however, we suppose that money is used, these propositions cease to be exactly true. It must be admitted that no person desires money for its own sake (unless some very rare cases of misers be an exception), and that he who sells his commodity, receiving money in exchange, does so with the intention of buying with that same money some other commodity. Interchange by means of money is therefore, as has been often observed, ultimately nothing but barter. But there is this difference—that in the case of barter, the selling and the buying are simultaneously confounded in one operation; you sell what you have, and buy what you want, by one indivisible act, and you cannot do the one without doing the other. Now the effect of the employment of money, and even the utility of it, is, that it enables this one act of interchange to be divided into two separate acts or operations; one of which may be performed now, and the other a year hence, or whenever it shall be most convenient. Although he who sells, really sells only to buy, he needs not buy at the same moment when he sells; and he does not therefore necessarily add to the *immediate* demand for one commodity when he adds to the supply of another. The buying and selling being now separated, it may very well occur, that there may be,

at some given time, a very general inclination to sell with as little delay as possible, accompanied with an equally general inclination to defer all purchases as long as possible. This is always actually the case, in those periods which are described as periods of general excess. And no one, after sufficient explanation, will contest the possibility of general excess, in this sense of the word. The state of things which we have just described, and which is of no uncommon occurrence, amounts to it.

For when there is a general anxiety to sell, and a general disinclination to buy, commodities of all kinds remain for a long time unsold, and those which find an immediate market, do so at a very low price. If it be said that when all commodities fall in price, the fall is of no consequence, since mere money-price is not material while the relative value of all commodities remains the same, we answer that this would be true if the low prices were to last for ever. But as it is certain that prices will rise again sooner or later, the person who is obliged by necessity to sell his commodity at a low money-price is really a sufferer, the money he receives sinking shortly to its ordinary value. Every person, therefore, delays selling if he can, keeping his capital unproductive in the meantime, and sustaining the consequent loss of interest. There is stagnation to those who are not obliged to sell, and distress to those who are.

It is true that this state can be only temporary, and must even be succeeded by a reaction of corresponding violence, since those who have sold without buying will certainly buy at last, and there will then be more buyers than sellers. But although the general over-supply is of necessity only temporary, this is no more than may be said of every partial over-supply. An overstocked state of the market is always temporary, and is generally followed by a more than common briskness of demand.

In order to render the argument for the impossibility of an excess of all commodities applicable to the case in which a circulating medium is employed, money must itself be considered as a commodity. It must, undoubtedly, be admitted that there cannot be an excess of all other commodities, and an excess of money at the same time.

But those who have, at periods such as we have described, affirmed that there was an excess of all commodities, never pretended that money was one of these commodities; they held that there was not an excess, but a deficiency of the circulating medium. What they called a general superabundance, was not a superabundance of commodities relatively to commodities, but a superabundance of all commodities relatively to money. What it amounted to was, that persons in general, at that particular time, from a general expectation of being called upon to meet sudden demands, liked better to possess money than any other commodity. Money, consequently, was in request, and all other commodities were in comparative disrepute. In extreme cases, money is collected in masses, and hoarded; in the milder cases, people merely defer parting with their money, or coming under any new engagements to part with it. But the result is, that all commodities fall in price, or become unsaleable. When this happens to one single commodity, there is said to be a superabundance of that commodity; and if that be a proper expression, there would seem to be in the nature of the case no particular impropriety in saying that there is a superabundance of all or most commodities, when all or most of them are in this same predicament.

It is, however, of the utmost importance to observe that excess of all commodities, in the only sense in which it is possible, means only a temporary fall in their value relatively to money. To suppose that the markets for all commodities could, in any other sense than this, be over-

stocked, involves the absurdity that commodities may fall in value relatively to themselves ; or that, of two commodities, each can fall relatively to the other, A becoming equivalent to $B - x$, and B to $A - x$, at the same time. And it is, perhaps, a sufficient reason for not using phrases of this description, that they suggest the idea of excessive production. A want of market for one article may arise from excessive production of that article ; but when commodities in general become unsaleable, it is from a very different cause ; there cannot be excessive production of commodities in general.

The argument against the possibility of general over-production is quite conclusive, so far as it applies to the doctrine that a country may accumulate capital too fast ; that produce in general may, by increasing faster than the demand for it, reduce all producers to distress. This proposition, strange to say, was almost a received doctrine as lately as thirty years ago ; and the merit of those who have exploded it is much greater than might be inferred from the extreme obviousness of its absurdity when it is stated in its native simplicity. It is true that if all the wants of all the inhabitants of a country were fully satisfied, no further capital could find useful employment ; but, in that case, none would be accumulated. So long as there remain any persons not possessed, we do not say of subsistence, but of the most refined luxuries, and who would work to possess them, there is employment for capital ; and if the commodities which these persons want are not produced and placed at their disposal, it can only be because capital does not exist, disposable for the purpose of employing, if not any other labourers, those very labourers themselves, in producing the articles for their own consumption. Nothing can be more chimerical than the fear that the accumulation of capital should produce poverty and not wealth, or that it will ever take

place too fast for its own end. Nothing is more true than that it is produce which constitutes the market for produce, and that every increase of production, if distributed without miscalculation among all kinds of produce in the proportion which private interest would dictate, creates, or rather constitutes, its own demand.

This is the truth which the deniers of general over-production have seized and enforced; nor is it pretended that anything has been added to it, or subtracted from it, in the present disquisition. But it is thought that those who receive the doctrine accompanied with the explanations which we have given, will understand, more clearly than before, what is, and what is not, implied in it; and will see that, when properly understood, it in no way contradicts those obvious facts which are universally known and admitted to be not only of possible, but of actual and even frequent occurrence. The doctrine in question only appears a paradox, because it has usually been so expressed as apparently to contradict these well-known facts; which, however, were equally well known to the authors of the doctrine, who, therefore, can only have adopted from inadvertence any form of expression which could to a candid person appear inconsistent with it. The essentials of the doctrine are preserved when it is allowed that there cannot be permanent excess of production, or of accumulation; though it be at the same time admitted, that as there may be a temporary excess of any one article considered separately, so may there of commodities generally, not in consequence of over-production, but of a want of commercial confidence.¹

¹ For further remarks upon *consumption* and *production*, see footnote, p. 128.—ED.

ESSAY III.

ON THE WORDS PRODUCTIVE AND UNPRODUCTIVE.

IT would probably be difficult to point out any two words, respecting the proper use of which political economists have been more divided, than they have been concerning the two words *productive* and *unproductive*; whether considered as applied to *labour*, to *consumption*, or to *expenditure*.

Although this is a question solely of nomenclature, it is one of sufficient importance to be worth another attempt to settle it satisfactorily. For, although writers on political economy have not agreed in the ideas which they were accustomed to annex to these terms, the terms have generally been employed to denote ideas of very great importance, and it is impossible that some vagueness should not have been thrown upon the ideas themselves by looseness in the use of the words by which they are habitually designated. Further, so long as the pedantic objection to the introduction of new technical terms continues, accurate thinkers on moral and political subjects are limited to a very scanty vocabulary for the expression of their ideas. It therefore is of great importance that the words with which mankind are familiar, should be turned to the greatest possible advantage as instruments of thought; that one word should not be used as the sign of an idea

which is already sufficiently expressed by another word; and that words which are required to denote ideas of great importance, should not be usurped for the expression of such as are comparatively insignificant.

The phrases *productive labour*, and *productive consumption*, have been employed by some writers on political economy with very great latitude. They have considered, and classed, as productive labour and productive consumption, all labour which serves any *useful* purpose—all consumption which is not *waste*. Mr. M'Culloch has asserted, *totidem verbis*, that the labour of Madame Pasta was as well entitled to be called productive labour as that of a cotton spinner.

Employed in this sense, the words *productive* and *unproductive* are superfluous, since the words *useful* and *agreeable* on the one hand, *useless* and *worthless* on the other, are quite sufficient to express all the ideas to which the words *productive* and *unproductive* are here applied.

This use of the terms, therefore, is subversive of the ends of language.

Those writers who have employed the words in a more limited sense, have usually understood by productive or unproductive labour, labour which is productive of wealth, or unproductive of wealth. But what is wealth? And here the words productive and unproductive have been affected with additional ambiguities, corresponding to the different extension which different writers have given to the term wealth.

Some have given the name of wealth to *all things* which tend to the use or enjoyment of mankind, and which possess exchangeable value. This last clause is added to exclude air, the light of the sun, and any other things which can be obtained in unlimited quantity without labour or sacrifice; together with all such things as,

though produced by labour, are not held in sufficient general estimation to command any price in the market.

But when this definition came to be explained, many persons were disposed to interpret "*all things* which tend to the use or enjoyment of man," as implying only all *material* things. *Immaterial* products they refuse to consider as wealth; and labour or expenditure which yielded nothing but immaterial products, they characterized as unproductive labour and unproductive expenditure.

To this it was, or might have been, answered, that according to this classification, a carpenter's labour at his trade is productive labour, but the same individual's labour in learning his trade was unproductive labour. Yet it is obvious that, on both occasions, his labour tended exclusively to what is allowed to be production: the one was equally indispensable with the other, to the ultimate result. Further, if we adopted the above definition, we should be obliged to say that a nation whose artisans were twice as skilful as those of another nation, was not, *ceteris paribus*, more wealthy; although it is evident that every one of the results of wealth, and everything for the sake of which wealth is desired, would be possessed by the former country in a higher degree than by the latter.

Every classification according to which a basket of cherries, gathered and eaten the next minute, are called wealth, while that title is denied to the acquired skill of those who are acknowledged to be productive labourers, is a purely arbitrary division, and does not conduce to the ends for which classification and nomenclature are designed.

In order to get over all difficulties, some political economists seem disposed to make the terms express a distinction sufficiently definite indeed, but more com-

pletely arbitrary, and having less foundation in nature, than any of the former. They will not allow to any labour or to any expenditure the name of productive, unless the produce which it yields returns into the hands of the very person who made the outlay. Hedging and ditching they term productive labour, though those operations conduce to production only indirectly, by protecting the produce from destruction; but the necessary expenses incurred by a government for the protection of property are, they insist upon it, consumed unproductively: though, as has been well pointed out by Mr. M'Culloch, these expenses, in their relation to the national wealth, are exactly analogous to the wages of a hedger or a ditcher. The only difference is, that the farmer, who pays for the hedging and ditching, is the person to whom the consequent increase of production accrues, while the government, which is at the expense of police officers and courts of justice, does not, as a necessary consequence, get back into its own coffers the increase of the national wealth resulting from the security of property.

It would be endless to point out the oddities and incongruities which result from this classification. Whether we take the words wealth and production in the largest, or in the most restricted sense in which they have ever yet been employed, nobody will dispute that roads, bridges, and canals, contribute in an eminent degree, and in a very direct manner, to the increase of production and wealth. The labour and pecuniary resources employed in their construction would, according to the above theory, be considered productive, if every occupier of land were compelled by law to construct so much of the road, or canal, as passes through his own farm. If, instead of this, the government makes the road, and throws it open to the public toll-free, the labour and expenditure would be, on the above system, clearly unproductive. But if the government, or an

association of individuals, made the road, and imposed a toll to defray the expense, we do not see how these writers could refuse to the outlay the title of productive expenditure. It would follow, that the very same labour and expense, if given gratuitously, must be called unproductive, which, if a charge had been made for it, would have been called productive.

When these consequences of the purely arbitrary classification to which we allude have been pointed out and complained of, the only answer which we have ever seen made to the objection is, that the line of demarcation must be drawn somewhere, and that in every classification there are intermediate cases, which might have been included, with almost equal propriety, either in the one class or in the other.

This answer appears to us to indicate the want of a sufficiently accurate and discriminating perception, what is the kind of inaccuracy which generally cannot be avoided in a classification, and what is that other kind of inaccuracy, from which it always may be, and should be, exempt.

The classes themselves may be, mentally speaking, perfectly definite, though it may not always be easy to say to which of them a particular object belongs. When it is uncertain in which of two classes an object should be placed, if the classification be properly made, and properly expressed, the uncertainty can turn only upon a matter of fact. It is uncertain to which class the object belongs, because it is doubtful whether it possesses in a greater degree the characteristics of the one class or those of the other. But the characteristics themselves may be defined and distinguished with the nicest exactness, and always ought to be so. Especially ought they in a case like the present, because here it is only the distinction between the ideas which is of any importance. That we should be able

with ease to portion out all employments between the two classes, does not happen to be of any particular consequence.

It is frequently said that classification is a mere affair of convenience. This assertion is true in one sense, but not if its meaning be, that the most proper classification is that in which it is easiest to say whether an object belongs to one class or to the other. The use of classification is, to fix attention upon the distinctions which exist among things ; and that is the best classification, which is founded upon the most important distinctions, whatever be the facilities which it may afford of ticketing and arranging the different objects which exist in nature. In fixing, therefore, the meaning of the words productive and unproductive, we ought to endeavour to render them significative of the most important distinctions which, without too glaring a violation of received usage, they can be made to express.

We ought further, when we are restricted to the employment of old words, to endeavour as far as possible that it shall not be necessary to struggle against the old associations with those words. We should, if possible, give the words such a meaning, that the propositions in which people are accustomed to use them, shall as far as possible still be true ; and that the feelings habitually excited by them, shall be such as the things to which we mean to appropriate them ought to excite.

We shall endeavour to unite these conditions in the result of the following inquiry.

In whatever manner political economists may have settled the definition of productive and unproductive labour or consumption, the consequences which they have drawn from the definition are nearly the same. In proportion to the amount of the productive labour and consumption of a country, the country, they all allow, is enriched : in proportion to the amount of the unproductive labour and

consumption, the country is impoverished. Productive expenditure they are accustomed to view as a gain; unproductive expenditure, however useful, as a sacrifice. Unproductive expenditure of what was destined to be expended productively, they always characterize as a squandering of resources, and call it profusion and prodigality. The productive expenditure of that which might, without encroaching upon capital, be expended unproductively, is called saving, economy, frugality. Want, misery, and starvation, are described as the lot of a nation which annually employs less and less of its labour and resources in production; growing comfort and opulence as the result of an annual increase in the quantity of wealth so employed.

Let us then examine what qualities in expenditure, and in the employment of labour, are those from which all the consequences above mentioned really flow.

The end to which all labour and all expenditure are directed, is twofold. Sometimes it is *enjoyment* immediately; the fulfilment of those desires, the gratification of which is wished for on its own account. Whenever labour or expense is not incurred *immediately* for the sake of enjoyment, and is yet not absolutely wasted, it must be incurred for the purpose of enjoyment *indirectly*, or mediately; by either repairing and perpetuating, or adding, to the *permanent sources* of enjoyment.

Sources of enjoyment may be accumulated and stored up; enjoyment itself cannot. The wealth of a country consists of the sum total of the permanent sources of enjoyment, whether material or immaterial, contained in it: and labour or expenditure which tends to augment or to keep up these permanent sources, should, we conceive, be termed productive.

Labour which is employed for the purpose of directly affording enjoyment, such as the labour of a performer on

a musical instrument, we term unproductive labour. Whatever is consumed by such a performer, we consider as unproductively consumed: the accumulated total of the sources of enjoyment which the nation possesses, is diminished by the amount of what he has consumed: whereas, if it had been given to him in exchange for his services in producing food or clothing, the total of the permanent sources of enjoyment in the country might have been not diminished but increased.

The performer on the musical instrument then is, so far as respects that act, not a productive, but an unproductive labourer. But what shall we say of the workman who made the musical instrument? He, most persons would say, is a productive labourer; and with reason; because the musical instrument is a permanent source of enjoyment, which does not begin and end with the enjoying, and therefore admits of being accumulated.

But the *skill* of the musician is a permanent source of enjoyment, as well as the instrument which he plays upon: and although skill is not a material object, but a quality of an object, viz., of the hands and mind of the performer; nevertheless skill possesses exchangeable value, is acquired by labour and capital, and is capable of being stored and accumulated. Skill, therefore, must be considered as wealth; and the labour and funds employed in acquiring skill in anything tending to the advantage or pleasure of mankind, must be considered to be productively employed and expended.

The skill of a productive labourer is analogous to the machinery he works with: neither of them is enjoyment, nor conduces directly to it, but both conduce indirectly to it, and both in the same way. If a spinning-jenny be wealth, the spinner's skill is also wealth. If the mechanic who made the spinning-jenny laboured productively, the spinner also laboured productively when he was learning

his trade: and what they both consumed was consumed productively, that is to say, its consumption did not tend to diminish, but to increase the sum of the permanent sources of enjoyment in the country, by effecting a new creation of those sources, more than equal to the amount of the consumption.

The skill of a tailor, and the implements he employs, contribute in the same way to the convenience of him who wears the coat, namely, a remote way: it is the coat itself which contributes immediately. The skill of Madame Pasta, and the building and decorations which aid the effect of her performance, contribute in the same way to the enjoyment of the audience, namely, an immediate way, without any intermediate instrumentality. The building and decorations are consumed unproductively, and Madame Pasta labours and consumes unproductively; for the building is used and worn out, and Madame Pasta performs, immediately for the spectators' enjoyment, and without leaving, as a consequence of the performance, any permanent result possessing exchangeable value: consequently the epithet unproductive must be equally applied to the gradual wearing out of the bricks and mortar, the nightly consumption of the more perishable "properties" of the theatre, the labour of Madame Pasta in acting, and of the orchestra in playing. But notwithstanding this, the architect who built the theatre was a productive labourer; so were the producers of the perishable articles; so were those who constructed the musical instruments; and so, we must be permitted to add, were those who instructed the musicians, and all persons who, by the instructions which they may have given to Madame Pasta, contributed to the formation of her talent. All these persons contributed to the enjoyment of the audience in the same way, and that a remote way, viz., by the production of a *permanent source of enjoyment*.

The difference between this case, and the case of the cotton-spinner already adverted to, is this. The spinning-jenny, and the skill of the cotton-spinner, are not only the result of productive labour, but are themselves productively consumed. The musical instrument and the skill of the musician are equally the result of productive labour, but are themselves unproductively consumed.

Let us now consider what kinds of labour, and of consumption or expenditure, will be classed as productive, and what as unproductive, according to this rule.

The following are always productive :

Labour and expenditure, of which the direct object or effect is the creation of some material product useful or agreeable to mankind.

Labour and expenditure, of which the direct effect and object are, to endow human or other animated beings with faculties or qualities useful or agreeable to mankind, and possessing exchangeable value.

Labour and expenditure, which without having for their direct object the creation of any useful material product or bodily or mental faculty or quality, yet tend indirectly to promote one or other of those ends, and are exerted or incurred solely for that purpose.

The following are partly productive and partly unproductive, and cannot with propriety be ranged decidedly with either class :

Labour or expenditure which does indeed create, or promote the creation of, some useful material product or bodily or mental faculty or quality, but which is not incurred or exerted for that sole end ; having also for another, and perhaps its principal end, enjoyment, or the promotion of enjoyment.

Such are the labour of the judge, the legislator, the police-officer, the soldier ; and the expenditure incurred for their support. These functionaries protect and secure man-

kind in the exclusive possession of such material products or acquired faculties as belong to them; and by the security which they so confer, they indirectly increase production in a degree far more than equivalent to the expense which is necessary for their maintenance. But this is not the only purpose for which they exist; they protect mankind, not merely in the possession of their permanent resources, but also in their actual enjoyments; and so far, although highly useful, they cannot, conformably to the distinction which we have attempted to lay down, be considered productive labourers.

Such, also, are the labour and the wages of domestic servants. Such persons are entertained mainly as subservient to mere enjoyment; but most of them occasionally, and some habitually, render services which must be considered as of a productive nature; such as that of cookery, the last stage in the manufacture of food; or gardening, a branch of agriculture.

The following are wholly unproductive :

Labour exerted, and expenditure incurred, directly and exclusively for the purpose of enjoyment, and not calling into existence anything, whether substance or quality, but such as begins and perishes in the enjoyment.

Labour exerted and expenditure incurred uselessly, or in pure waste, and yielding neither direct enjoyment nor permanent sources of enjoyment.

It may be objected, that expenditure incurred even for pure enjoyment promotes production indirectly, by inciting to exertion. Thus the view of the splendour of a rich establishment is supposed by some writers to produce upon the mind of an indigent spectator an earnest desire of enjoying the same luxuries, and a consequent purpose of working with vigour and diligence, and saving from his earnings, thus increasing the productive capital of the country.

It is true that mankind are, for the most part, excited to productive industry solely by the desire of subsequently consuming the result of their labour and accumulation. The consumption called unproductive, viz., that of which the direct result is enjoyment, is in reality the end, to which production is only the means; and a desire for the end, is what alone impels anyone to have recourse to the means.

But, notwithstanding this, it is of the greatest importance to mark the distinction between the labour and the consumption which have enjoyment for their immediate end, and the labour and the consumption of which the immediate end is reproduction. Though the sight of the former may still further stimulate that desire for the enjoyments afforded by wealth, which the mere knowledge, without the immediate view, would suffice to excite (and without dwelling on the consideration that if the example of a large expenditure excites one individual to accumulation, it encourages two to prodigal expense); still, if we look only to the effects which are intended, or to those which immediately follow from the consumption, and whose connection with it can be distinctly traced, it evidently renders a country poorer in the permanent sources of enjoyment; while reproductive consumption leaves the country richer in these same sources. Besides, if what is spent for mere pleasure promotes indirectly the increase of wealth, it can only be by inducing others *not* to expend on mere pleasure.

Before quitting the subject, one more observation should be added. It must not be supposed that what is expended upon unproductive labourers is necessarily, the whole of it, unproductively consumed. The unproductive labourers may save part of their wages, and invest them in a productive employment.

It is not unusual to speak of what is paid in wages to a

labourer as being thereby *consumed*, as if all profit and loss to the nation were to be seen in the capitalist's account-book. What is paid for productive labour is said to be productively consumed; what is paid for unproductive labour is said to be consumed unproductively. It would be proper to say, not that it is productively or unproductively *consumed*, but productively or unproductively *expended*; otherwise, we shall be obliged to say that it is consumed twice over; the first time unproductively, perhaps, and the second, it may be, productively.

To pronounce in which way the wages of the labourer are consumed, we must follow them into the labourer's own hands. As much as is necessary to keep the productive labourer in perfect health and fitness for his employment, may be said to be consumed productively. To this should be added what he expends in rearing children to the age at which they become capable of productive industry. If the state of the market for labour be such as to afford him more, this he may either save, or, as the common expression is, he may spend it. If he saves any portion, this (unless it be merely hoarded) he intends to employ productively, and it will be productively consumed. If he spends it, the consumption is for enjoyment immediately, and is therefore unproductive.

This suggests another correction in the established language. Political economists generally define the "net produce" to be that portion of the gross annual produce of a country which remains after replacing the capital annually consumed. This, as they proceed to explain, consists of profits and rent; wages being included in the other portion of the gross produce, that which goes to replace capital. After this definition, they usually proceed to tell us that the net produce, and that alone, constitutes the fund from which a nation can accumulate, and add to its capital, as also that which it can, without retrograding in wealth,

expend unproductively, or for enjoyment. Now, it is impossible that both the above propositions can be true. If the net produce is that which remains after replacing capital, then net produce is not the only fund out of which accumulation may be made: for accumulation may be made from wages; this is in all countries one of the great sources, and in countries like America perhaps the greatest source of accumulation. If, on the other hand, it is desirable to reserve the name of net produce to denote the fund available for accumulation or for unproductive consumption, we must define net produce differently. The definition which appears the best adapted to render the ordinary doctrines relating to net produce true, would be this:

The net produce of a country is whatever is annually produced beyond what is necessary for maintaining the stock of materials and implements unimpaired, for keeping all productive labourers alive and in condition for work, and for just keeping up their numbers without increase. What is required for these purposes, or, in other words, for keeping up the productive resources of the country, cannot be diverted from its destination without rendering the nation as a whole poorer. But all which is produced beyond this, whether it be in the hands of the labourer, of the capitalist, or of any of the numerous varieties of rent-owners, may be taken for immediate enjoyment, without prejudice to the productive resources of the community; and whatever part of it is not so taken, constitutes a clear addition to the national capital, or to the permanent sources of enjoyment.¹

¹ See also footnote, p. 128.—ED.

ESSAY IV.

ON PROFITS AND INTEREST.¹

THE profits of stock are the surplus which remains to the capitalist after replacing his capital: and the ratio which that surplus bears to the capital itself, is the *rate of profit*.

This being the definition of profits, it might seem natural to adopt, as a sufficient theory in regard to the rate of profit, that it depends upon the productive power of capital. Some countries are favoured beyond others, either by nature or art, in the means of production. If the powers of the soil, or of machinery, enable capital to produce what is necessary for replacing itself, and twenty per cent. more, profits will be twenty per cent.; and so on.

This, accordingly, is a popular mode of speaking on the subject of profits; but it has only the semblance, not the reality, of an explanation. The "productive power of capital," though a common, and, for some purposes, a convenient expression, is a delusive one. Capital, strictly speaking, has no productive power. The only productive power is that of labour; assisted, no doubt, by tools, and acting upon materials. That portion of capital which consists of tools and materials, may be said, perhaps, without any great impropriety, to have a productive power, because

¹ See note at p. 6.—ED.

they contribute, along with labour, to the accomplishment of production. But that portion of capital which consists of wages, has no productive power of its own. Wages have no productive power; they are the price of a productive power. Wages do not contribute, along with labour, to the production of commodities, no more than the price of tools contributes along with the tools themselves. If labour could be had without purchase, wages might be dispensed with. That portion of capital which is expended in the wages of labour, is only the means by which the capitalist procures to himself, in the way of purchase, the use of that labour in which the power of production really resides.

The proper view of capital is, that anything whatever, which a person possesses, constitutes his capital, provided he is able, and intends, to employ it, not in consumption for the purpose of enjoyment, but in possessing himself of the means of production, with the intention of employing those means productively. Now the means of production are labour, implements, and materials. The only productive power which anywhere exists, is the productive power of labour, implements, and materials.

We need not, on this account, altogether proscribe the expression, "productive power of capital;" but we should carefully note, that it can only mean the quantity of real productive power which the capitalist, by means of his capital, can command. This may change, though the productive power of labour remains the same. Wages, for example, may rise; and then, although all the circumstances of production remain exactly as they were before, the same capital will yield a less return, because it will set in motion a less quantity of productive labour.

We may, therefore, consider the capital of a producer as measured by the means which he has of possessing himself of the different essentials of production: namely, labour,

and the various articles which labour requires as materials, or of which it avails itself as aids. The ratio between the price which he has to pay for these means of production, and the produce which they enable him to raise, is the *rate of his profit*. If he must give for labour and tools four-fifths of what they will produce, the remaining fifth will constitute his profit, and will give him a rate of one in four, or twenty-five per cent. on his outlay.

It is necessary here to remark, what cannot indeed by any possibility be misunderstood, but might possibly be overlooked in cases where attention to it is indispensable, viz., that we are speaking now of the *rate* of profit, not the gross profit. If the capital of the country is very great, a profit of only five per cent. upon it may be much more ample, may support a much larger number of capitalists and their families in much greater affluence, than a profit of twenty-five per cent. on the comparatively small capital of a poor country. The *gross* profit of a country is the actual amount of necessities, conveniences, and luxuries, which are divided among its capitalists: but whether this be large or small, the rate of profit may be just the same. The rate of profit is the proportion which the profit bears to the capital; which the surplus produce after replacing the outlay, bears to the outlay. In short, if we compare the *price paid* for labour and tools with what that labour and those tools will *produce*, from this ratio we may calculate the rate of profit.

As the gross profit may be very different though the rate of profit be the same; so also may the absolute price paid for labour and tools be very different, and yet the proportion between the price paid and the produce obtained may be just the same. For greater clearness, let us omit, for the present, the consideration of tools, materials, etc., and conceive production as the result solely of labour. In a certain country, let us suppose, the wages of each

labourer are one quarter of wheat per year, and 100 men can produce, in one year, 120 quarters. Here the price paid for labour is to the produce of that labour as 100 to 120, and profits are 20 per cent. Suppose now that, in another country, wages are just double what they are in the country before supposed; namely, two quarters of wheat per year, for each labourer. But suppose, likewise, that the productive power of labour is double what it is in the first country; that by the greater fertility of the soil, 100 men can produce 240 quarters, instead of 120 as before. Here it is obvious, that the real price paid for labour is twice as great in the one country as in the other; but the produce being also twice as great, the ratio between the price of labour and the produce of labour is still exactly the same: an outlay of 200 quarters gives a return of 240 quarters, and profits, as before, are 20 per cent.

Profits, then (meaning not gross profits, but the rate of profit), depend (not upon the price of labour, tools, and materials—but) upon the ratio between the price of labour, tools, and materials, and the produce of them: upon the proportionate share of the produce of industry which it is necessary to offer, in order to purchase that industry and the means of setting it in motion.

We have hitherto spoken of tools, buildings, and materials, as essentials of production, co-ordinate with labour, and equally indispensable with it. This is true; but it is also true that tools, buildings, and materials, are themselves the produce of labour; and that the only cause (cases of monopoly excepted) of their having any value, is the labour which is required for their production.

If tools, buildings, and materials, were the spontaneous gifts of nature, requiring no labour either in order to produce or appropriate them; and if they were thus

bestowed upon mankind in indefinite quantity, and without the possibility of being monopolized; they would still be as careful, as indispensable as they now are; but since they could, like air and the light of the sun, be obtained without cost or sacrifice, they would form no part of the expenses of production, and no portion of the produce would be required to be set aside in order to replace the outlay made for these purposes. The whole produce, therefore, after replacing the wages of labour, would be clear profit to the capitalist.

Labour alone is the primary means of production; "the original purchase-money which has been paid for everything." Tools and materials, like other things, have originally cost nothing but labour; and have a value in the market only because wages have been paid for them. The labour employed in making the tools and materials being added to the labour afterwards employed in working up the materials by aid of the tools, the sum total gives the whole of the labour employed in the production of the completed commodity. In the ultimate analysis, therefore, labour appears to be the only essential of production. To replace capital, is to replace nothing but the wages of the labour employed. Consequently, the whole of the surplus, after replacing wages, is profits. From this it seems to follow, that the ratio between the wages of labour and the produce of that labour gives the rate of profit. And thus we arrive at Mr. Ricardo's principle, that profits depend upon wages; rising as wages fall, and falling as wages rise.

To protect this proposition (the most perfect form in which the law of profits seems to have been yet exhibited) against misapprehension, one or two explanatory remarks are required.

If by wages be meant what constitutes the real affluence of the labourer, the *quantity* of produce which he receives

in exchange for this labour; the proposition that profits vary inversely as wages will be obviously false. The rate of profit (as has been already observed and exemplified) does not depend upon the price of labour, but upon the proportion between the price of labour and the produce of it. If the produce of labour is large, the price of labour may also be large without any diminution of the rate of profit: and, in fact, the rate of profit is highest in those countries (as, for instance, North America) where the labourer is most largely remunerated. For the wages of labour, though so large, bear a less proportion to the abundant *produce* of labour, there than elsewhere.

But this does not affect the truth of Mr. Ricardo's principle as he himself understood it; because an increase of the labourer's real comforts was not considered by him as a rise of wages. In his language wages were only said to rise, when they rose not in mere quantity but in *value*. To the labourer himself (he would have said) the *quantity* of his remuneration is the important circumstance: but its *value* is the only thing of importance to the person who purchases his labour.

The rate of profits depends not upon absolute or real wages, but upon the *value* of wages.

If, however, by value, Mr. Ricardo had meant *exchangeable* value, his proposition would still have been remote from the truth. Profits depend no more upon the exchangeable value of the labourer's remuneration than upon its quantity. The truth is, that by the exchangeable value is meant the quantity of commodities which the labourer can purchase with his wages; so that when we say the exchangeable value of wages, we say their quantity, under another name.

Mr. Ricardo, however, did not use the word value in the sense of exchangeable value.

Occasionally, in his writings, he could not avoid using

the word as other people use it, to denote value in exchange. But he more frequently employed it in a sense peculiar to himself, to denote cost of production; in other words, the *quantity of labour* required to produce the article; that being his criterion of cost of production. Thus, if a hat could be made with ten days' labour in France and with five days' labour in England, he said that the value of a hat was double in France of what it was in England. If a quarter of corn could be produced a century ago with half as much labour as is necessary at present, Mr. Ricardo said that the value of a quarter of corn had doubled.

Mr. Ricardo, therefore, would not have said that wages had risen, because a labourer could obtain two pecks of flour instead of one, for a day's labour; but if last year he received, for a day's labour, something which required eight hours' labour to produce it, and this year something which requires nine hours, then Mr. Ricardo would say that wages had risen. A rise of wages, with Mr. Ricardo, meant an increase in the cost of production of wages; an increase in the number of hours' labour which go to produce the wages of a day's labour; an increase in the *proportion* of the fruits of labour which the labourer receives for his own share; an increase in the ratio between the wages of his labour and the produce of it. This is the theory: the reasoning, of which it is the result, has been given in the preceding paragraphs.

Some of Mr. Ricardo's followers, or more properly, of those who have adopted in most particulars the views of political economy which his genius was the first to open up, have given explanations of Mr. Ricardo's doctrine to nearly the same effect as the above, but in rather different terms. They have said that profits depend not on *absolute*, but on *proportional* wages: which they expounded to mean the proportion which the labourers *en masse* receive of the total produce of the country.

It seems, however, to be rather an unusual and inconvenient use of language to speak of anything as depending upon the wages of labour, and then to explain that by wages of labour you do not mean the wages of an individual labourer, but of all the labourers in the country collectively. Mankind will never agree to call anything a rise of wages, except a rise of the wages of individual labourers, and it is therefore preferable to employ language tending to fix attention upon the wages of the individual. The wages, however, on which profits are said to depend, are undoubtedly *proportional* wages, namely, the proportional wages of one labourer: that is, the ratio between the wages of one labourer, and (not the whole produce of the country, but) the amount of what one labourer can produce; the amount of that portion of the collective produce of the industry of the country, which may be considered as corresponding to the labour of one single labourer. Proportional wages, thus understood, may be concisely termed the cost of production of wages; or, more concisely still, the cost of wages, meaning their cost in the "original purchase-money," labour.

We have now arrived at a distinct conception of Mr. Ricardo's theory of profits in its most perfect state. And this theory we conceive to be the basis of the true theory of profits. All that remains to do is to clear it from certain difficulties which still surround it, and which, though in a greater degree apparent than real, are not to be put aside as wholly imaginary.

Though it is true that tools, materials, and buildings (it is to be wished that there were some compact designation for all these essentials of production taken together,) are themselves the produce of labour, and are only on that account to be ranked among the expenses of production; yet the *whole* of their value is not resolvable into the wages of the labourers by whom they were produced. The wages

of those labourers were paid by a capitalist, and that capitalist must have the same profit upon his advances as any other capitalist; when, therefore, he sells the tools or materials, he must receive from the purchaser not only the reimbursement of the wages he has paid, but also as much more as will afford him the ordinary rate of profit. And when the producer, after buying the tools and employing them in his own occupation, comes to estimate his gains, he must set aside a portion of the produce to replace not only the wages paid both by himself and by the tool-maker, but also the profits of the tool-maker, advanced by himself out of his own capital.

It is not correct, therefore, to state that all which the capitalist retains after replacing wages forms his profit. It is true the whole return to capital is either wages or profits; but profits do not compose merely the surplus after replacing the outlay; they also enter into the outlay itself. Capital is expended partly in paying or reimbursing wages, and partly in paying the profits of other capitalists, whose concurrence was necessary in order to bring together the means of production.

If any contrivance, therefore, were devised by which that part of the outlay which consists of previous profits could be either wholly or partially dispensed with, it is evident that more would remain as the profit of the immediate producer; while, as the quantity of *labour* necessary to produce a given quantity of the commodity would be unaltered, as well as the quantity of produce paid for that labour, it seems that the ratio between the price of labour and its produce would be the same as before; that the cost of production of wages would be the same, proportional wages the same, and yet profits different.

To illustrate this by a simple instance, let it be supposed that one-third of the produce is sufficient to replace the

wages of the labourers who have been immediately instrumental in the production ; that another third is necessary to replace the materials used and the fixed capital worn out in the process ; while the remaining third is clear gain, being a profit of 50 per cent. Suppose, for example, that 60 agricultural labourers, receiving 60 quarters of corn for their wages, consume fixed capital and seed amounting to the value of 60 quarters more, and that the result of their operations is a produce of 180 quarters. When we analyse the price of the seed and tools into its elements, we find that they must have been the produce of the labour of 40 men : for the wages of those 40, together with profit at the rate previously supposed (50 per cent.) make up 60 quarters. The produce, therefore, consisting of 180 quarters, is the result of the labour altogether of 100 men : namely, the 60 first mentioned, and the 40 by whose labour the fixed capital and the seed were produced.

Let us now suppose, by way of an extreme case, that some contrivance is discovered, whereby the purposes to which the second third of the produce had been devoted, may be dispensed with altogether : that some means are invented by which the same amount of produce may be procured without the assistance of any fixed capital, or the consumption of any seed or material sufficiently valuable to be worth calculating. Let us, however, suppose that this cannot be done without taking on a number of additional labourers, equal to those required for producing the seed and fixed capital ; so that the saving shall be only in the profits of the previous capitalists. Let us, in conformity with this supposition, assume that in dispensing with the fixed capital and seed, value 60 quarters, it is necessary to take on 40 additional labourers, receiving a quarter of corn each, as before.

The rate of profit has evidently risen. It has increased from 50 per cent. to 80 per cent. A return of 180 quarters

could not before be obtained but by an outlay of 120 quarters; it can now be obtained by an outlay of no more than 100.

Here, therefore, is an undeniable rise of profits. Have wages, in the sense above attached to them, fallen or not? It would seem not.

The produce (180 quarters) is still the result of the same quantity of labour as before, namely, the labour of 100 men. A quarter of corn, therefore, is still, as before, the produce of $\frac{1}{180}$ of a man's labour for a year. Each labourer receives, as before, one quarter of corn; each, therefore, receives the produce of $\frac{1}{180}$ of a year's labour of one man, that is, the same cost of production; each receives $\frac{1}{180}$ of the produce of his own labour, that is, the same proportional wages; and the labourers collectively still receive the same proportion, namely $\frac{1}{180}$ of the whole produce.

The conclusion, then, cannot be resisted, that Mr. Ricardo's theory is defective: that the rate of profit does *not* exclusively depend upon the value of wages, in his sense, namely, the quantity of labour of which the wages of a labourer are the produce; that it does *not* exclusively depend upon proportional wages, that is, upon the proportion which the labourers collectively receive of the whole produce, or the ratio which the wages of an individual labourer bear to the produce of his individual labour.

Those political economists, therefore, who have always dissented from Mr. Ricardo's doctrine, or who, having at first admitted, ended by discarding it, were so far in the right; but they committed a serious error in this, that, with the usual one-sidedness of disputants, they knew no medium between admitting absolutely and dismissing entirely; and saw no other course than utterly to reject what it would have been sufficient to modify.

It is remarkable how very slight a modification will suffice to render Mr. Ricardo's doctrine completely true.

It is even doubtful whether he himself, if called upon to adapt his expressions to this peculiar case, would not have so explained his doctrine as to render it entirely unobjectionable.

It is perfectly true, that, in the example already made use of, a rise of profits takes place, while wages, considered in respect to the quantity of labour of which they are the produce, have not varied at all. But though wages are still the produce of the same *quantity of labour* as before, the *cost of production* of wages has nevertheless fallen; for into cost of production there enters another element besides labour.

We have already remarked (and the very example out of which the difficulty arose presupposes it) that the cost of production of an article consists generally of two parts,—the *wages* of the labour employed, and the *profits* of those who, in any antecedent stage of the production, have advanced any portion of those wages. An article, therefore, may be the produce of the same quantity of labour as before, and yet, if any portion of the profits which the last producer has to make good to previous producers can be economized, the cost of production of the article is diminished.

Now, in our example, a diminution of this sort is supposed to have taken place in the cost of production of corn. The production of that article has become less costly, in the ratio of 6 to 5. A quantity of corn, the means of producing which could not previously have been secured but at an expense of 120 quarters, can now be produced by means which 100 quarters are sufficient to purchase.

But the labourer is supposed to receive the same quantity of corn as before. He receives 1 quarter. The cost of production of wages has, therefore, fallen one-sixth. A quarter of corn, which is the remuneration of a single

labourer, is indeed the produce of the same quantity of labour as before ; but its cost of production is nevertheless diminished. It is now the produce of $\frac{1}{8}$ of a man's labour, and nothing else ; whereas formerly it required for its production the conjunction of that quantity of labour with an expenditure, in the form of reimbursement of profit, amounting to one-fifth more.

If the cost of production of wages had remained the same as before, profits could not have risen. Each labourer received 1 quarter of corn ; but 1 quarter of corn at that time was the result of the same cost of production, as $1\frac{1}{5}$ quarter now. In order, therefore, that each labourer should receive the same cost of production, each must now receive 1 quarter of corn, *plus* one-fifth. The labour of 100 men could not be purchased at this price for less than 120 quarters ; and the produce, 180 quarters, would yield only 50 per cent, as first supposed.¹

It is, therefore, strictly true, that the rate of profits varies inversely as the cost of production of wages. Profits cannot rise, unless the cost of production of wages falls exactly as much ; nor fall, unless it rises.

The proof of this position has been stated in figures, and in a particular case : we shall now state it in general terms, and for all cases.

We have supposed, for simplicity, that wages are paid in the finished commodity. The agricultural labourers, in our example, were paid in corn, and if we had called them

¹ It would be easy to go over in the same manner any other case. For instance, we may suppose, that, instead of dispensing with the *whole* of the fixed capital, material, etc., and taking on labourers in equal number to those by whom these were produced, *half* only of the fixed capital and material is dispensed with ; so that, instead of 60 labourers and a fixed capital worth 60 quarters of corn, we have 80 labourers and a fixed capital worth 30. The numerical statement of this case is more intricate than that in the text, but the result is not different.

weavers, we should have supposed them to be paid in cloth. This supposition is allowable, for it is obviously of no consequence, in a question of value, or cost of production, what precise article we assume as the medium of exchange. The supposition has, besides, the recommendation of being conformable to the most ordinary state of the facts; for it is by the sale of his own finished article that each capitalist obtains the means of hiring labourers to renew the production; which is virtually the same thing as if, instead of selling the article for money and giving the money to his labourers, he gave the article itself to the labourers, and they sold it for their daily bread.

Assuming, therefore, that the labourer is paid in the very article he produces, it is evident that, when any saving of expense takes place in the production of that article, if the labourer still receives the same cost of production as before, he must receive an increased quantity, in the very same ratio in which the productive power of capital has been increased. But, if so, the outlay of the capitalist will bear exactly the same proportion to the return as it did before; and profits will not rise.

The variations, therefore, in the rate of profits, and those in the cost of production of wages, go hand in hand, and are inseparable. Mr. Ricardo's principle, that profits cannot rise unless wages fall, is strictly true, if by low wages be meant not merely wages which are the produce of a smaller quantity of labour, but wages which are produced at less cost, reckoning labour and previous profits together. But the interpretation which some economists have put upon Mr. Ricardo's doctrine, when they explain it to mean that profits depend upon the proportion which the labourers collectively receive of the aggregate produce, will not hold at all; for that, in our first example, remained the same, and yet profits rose.

The only expression of the law of profits, which seems to be correct, is, that they depend upon the cost of production of wages. This must be received as the ultimate principle.

From this may be deduced all the corollaries which Mr. Ricardo and others have drawn from this theory of profits as expounded by himself. The cost of production of the wages of one labourer for a year, is the result of two concurrent elements or factors,—viz., 1st, the quantity of commodities which the state of the labour market affords to him; 2ndly, the cost of production of each of those commodities. It follows, that the rate of profits can never rise but in conjunction with one or other of two changes,—1st, a diminished remuneration of the labourer; or, 2ndly, an improvement in production, or an extension of commerce, by which any of the articles habitually consumed by the labourer may be obtained at smaller cost. (If the improvement be in any article which is not consumed by the labourer, it merely lowers the price of that article, and thereby benefits capitalists and all other people so far as they are consumers of that particular article, and may be said to increase gross profit, but not the rate of profit.)

So, on the other hand, the rate of profit cannot fall, unless concurrently with one of two events: 1st, an improvement in the labourer's condition; or, 2ndly, an increased difficulty of producing or importing some article which the labourer habitually consumes. The progress of population and cultivation has a tendency to lower profits through the latter of these two channels, owing to the well-known law of the application of capital to land, that a double capital does not *cæteris paribus* yield a double produce. There is, therefore, a tendency in the rate of profits to fall with the progress of society. But there is also an antagonist tendency of profits to rise, by the suc-

cessive introduction of improvements in agriculture, and in the production of those manufactured articles which the labourers consume. Supposing, therefore, that the actual comforts of the labourer remain the same, profits will fall or rise, according as population, or improvements in the production of food and other necessities, advance fastest.

The rate of profits, therefore, tends to *fall* from the following causes:—1. An increase of capital beyond population, producing increased competition for labour; 2. An increase of population, occasioning a demand for an increased quantity of food, which must be produced at a greater cost. The rate of profit tends to *rise* from the following causes:—1. An increase of population beyond capital, producing increased competition for employment; 2. Improvements producing increased cheapness of necessities, and other articles habitually consumed by the labourer.

The circumstances which regulate the rate of interest have usually been treated, even by professed writers on political economy, in a vague, loose, and unscientific manner. It has, however, been felt that there is some connection between the rate of interest and the rate of profit; that (to use the words of Adam Smith) much will be given for money, when much can be made of it. It has been felt, also, that the fluctuations in the market-rate of interest from day to day, are determined, like other matters of bargain and sale, by demand and supply. It has, therefore, been considered as an established principle, that the rate of interest varies from day to day according to the quantity of capital offered or called for on loan; but conforms on the average of years to a standard determined by the rate of profits, and bearing some proportion to that rate—but a proportion which few attempts have been made to define.

In consequence of these views, it has been customary to judge of the general rate of profits at any time or place, by the rate of interest at that time and place: it being supposed that the rate of interest, though liable to temporary fluctuations, can never vary for any long period of time unless profits vary; a notion which appears to us to be erroneous.

It was observed by Adam Smith, that profits may be considered as divided into two parts, of which one may properly be considered as the remuneration for the use of the capital itself, the other as the reward of the labour of superintending its employment; and that the former of these will correspond with the rate of interest. The producer who borrows capital to employ it in his business, will consent to pay, for the use of it, all that remains of the profits he can make by it, after reserving what he considers reasonable remuneration for the trouble and risk which he incurs by borrowing and employing it.

This remark is just; but it seems necessary to give greater precision to the ideas which it involves.

The difference between the profit which can be made by the use of capital, and the interest which will be paid for it, is rightly characterized as wages of superintendence. But to infer from this that it is regulated by entirely the same principles as other wages, would be to push the analogy too far. It is wages, but wages paid by a commission upon the capital employed. If the general rate of profit is 10 per cent., and the rate of interest 5 per cent., the wages of superintendence will be 5 per cent.; and though one borrower employ a capital of £100,000, another no more than £100, the labour of both will be rewarded with the same percentage, though, in the one case, this symbol will represent an income of £5, in the other case, of £5,000. Yet it cannot be pretended that the labour of the two borrowers differs in this proportion.

The rule, therefore, that equal quantities of labour of equal hardness and skill are equally remunerated, does not hold of this kind of labour. The wages of any other labour are here an inapplicable criterion.

The wages of superintendence are distinguished from ordinary wages by another peculiarity, that they are not paid in advance out of capital, like the wages of all other labourers, but merge in the profit, and are not realized until the production is completed. This takes them entirely out of the ordinary law of wages. The wages of labourers who are paid in advance, are regulated by the number of competitors compared with the amount of capital; the labourers can consume no more than what has been previously accumulated. But there is no such limit to the remuneration of a kind of labour which is not paid for out of wealth previously accumulated, but out of that produce which it is itself employed in calling into existence.

When these circumstances are duly weighed, it will be perceived, that although profit may be correctly analyzed into interest and wages of superintendence, we ought not to lay it down as the law of interest, that it is profits *minus* the wages of superintendence. Of the two expressions, it would be decidedly the more correct, that the wages of superintendence are regulated by the rate of interest, or are equal to profits *minus* interest. In strict propriety, neither expression would be allowable. Interest, and the wages of superintendence, can scarcely be said to depend upon one another. They are to one another in the same relation as wages and profits are. They are like two buckets in a well: when one rises the other descends, but neither of the two motions is the cause of the other; both are simultaneous effects of the same cause, the turning of the windlass.

There are among the capitalists of every country a considerable number who are habitually, and almost necessarily,

lenders; to whom scarcely any difference between what they could receive for their money and what could be made by it, would be an equivalent for incurring the risk and labour of carrying on business. In this predicament is the property of widows and orphans; of many public bodies; of charitable institutions; most property which is vested in trustees; and the property of a great number of persons unused to business, and who have a distaste for it, or whose other occupations prevent their engaging in it. How large a proportion of the property lent to the nation comes under this description, has been pointed out in Mr. Tooke's "Considerations on the State of the Currency."

There is another large class, consisting of bankers, bill-brokers, and others, who are money-lenders by profession; who enter into that profession with the intention of making such gains as it will yield them, and who would not be induced to change their business by any but a very strong pecuniary inducement.

There is, therefore, a large class of persons who are habitually lenders. On the other hand, all persons in business may be considered as habitually borrowers. Except in times of stagnation, they are all desirous of extending their business beyond their own capital, and are never desirous of lending any portion of their capital except for very short periods, during which they cannot advantageously invest it in their own trade.

There is, in short, a productive class, and there is, besides, a class technically styled the monied class, who live upon the interest of their capital, without engaging personally in the work of production.

The class of borrowers may be considered as unlimited. There is no quantity of capital that could be offered to be lent, which the productive classes would not be willing to borrow, at any rate of interest which would afford them the slightest excess of profit above a bare equivalent for

the additional risk, incurred by that transaction, of the evils attendant on insolvency. The only assignable limit to the inclination to borrow, is the power of giving security: the producers would find it difficult to borrow more than an amount equal to their own capital. If more than half the capital of the country were in the hands of persons who preferred lending it to engaging personally in business, and if the surplus were greater than could be invested in loans to Government, or in mortgages upon the property of unproductive consumers; the competition of lenders would force down the rate of interest very low. A certain portion of the monied class would be obliged either to sacrifice their predilections by engaging in business, or to lend on inferior security; and they would accordingly accept, where they could obtain good security, an abatement of interest equivalent to the difference of risk.

This is an extreme case. Let us put an extreme case of a contrary kind. Suppose that the wealthy people of any country, not relishing an idle life, and having a strong taste for gainful labour, were generally indisposed to accept of a smaller income in order to be relieved from the labour and anxiety of business. Every producer in flourishing circumstances would be eager to borrow, and few willing to lend. Under these circumstances the rate of interest would differ very little from the rate of profit. The trouble of managing a business is not proportionally increased by an increase of the magnitude of the business; and a very small surplus profit above the rate of interest, would therefore be a sufficient inducement to capitalists to borrow.

We may even conceive a people whose habits were such, that in order to induce them to lend, it might be necessary to offer them a rate of interest fully equal to the ordinary rate of profit. In that case, of course, the productive classes would scarcely ever borrow. But government, and the unproductive classes, who do not borrow in order to

make a profit by the loan, but from the pressure of a real or supposed necessity, might still be ready to borrow at this high rate.

Although the inclination to borrow has no *fixed* or *necessary* limit except the power of giving security, yet it always, in point of fact, stops short of this; from the uncertainty of the prospects of any individual producer, which generally indisposes him to involve himself to the full extent of his means of payment. There is never any permanent want of market for things in general; but there may be so for the commodity which any one individual is producing; and even if there is a demand for the commodity, people may not buy it of him but of some other. There are, consequently, never more than a portion of the producers, the state of whose business encourages them to add to their capital by borrowing; and even these are disposed to borrow only as much as they see an *immediate* prospect of profitably employing. There is, therefore, a practical limit to the demands of borrowers at any given instant; and when these demands are all satisfied, any additional capital offered on loan can find an investment only by a reduction of the rate of interest.

The amount of borrowers being given (and by the amount of borrowers is here meant the aggregate sum which people are willing to borrow at some given rate), the rate of interest will depend upon the quantity of capital owned by people who are unwilling or unable to engage in trade. The circumstances which determine this, are, on the one hand, the degree in which a taste for business, or an aversion to it, happens to be prevalent among the classes possessed of property; and on the other hand, the amount of the annual accumulation from the earnings of labour. Those who accumulate from their wages, fees, or salaries, have, of course (speaking generally), no means of investing their savings except by lending them to others: their occupa-

tions prevent them from personally superintending any employment.

Upon these circumstances, then, the rate of interest depends, the amount of borrowers being given. And the counter-proposition equally holds, that, the above circumstances being given, the rate of interest depends upon the amount of borrowers.

Suppose, for example, that when the rate of interest has adjusted itself to the existing state of the circumstances which affect the disposition to borrow and to lend, a war breaks out, which induces government, for a series of years, to borrow annually a large sum of money. During the whole of this period, the rate of interest will remain considerably above what it was before, and what it will be afterwards.

Before the commencement of the supposed war, all persons who were disposed to lend at the then rate of interest, had found borrowers, and their capital was invested. This may be assumed; for if any capital had been seeking for a borrower at the existing rate of interest, and unable to find one, its owner would have offered it at a rate slightly below the existing rate. He would, for instance, have bought into the funds, at a slight advance of price; and thus set at liberty the capital of some fundholder, who, the funds yielding a lower interest, would have been obliged to accept a lower interest from individuals.

Since, then, all who were willing to lend their capital at the market-rate, have already lent it, Government will not be able to borrow unless by offering higher interest. Though, with the existing habits of the possessors of disposable capital, an increased number cannot be found who are willing to lend at the existing rate, there are doubtless some who will be induced to lend by the temptation of a higher rate. The same temptation will also induce some persons to invest, in the purchase of the new stock, what

they would otherwise have expended unproductively in increasing their establishments, or productively, in improving their estates. The rate of interest will rise just sufficiently to call forth an increase of lenders to the amount required.

This we apprehend to be the cause why the rate of interest in this country was so high as it is well known to have been during the last war. It is, therefore, by no means to be inferred, as some have done, that the general rate of profits was unusually high during the same period, because interest was so. Supposing the rate of profits to have been precisely the same during the war, as before or after it, the rate of interest would nevertheless have risen, from the causes and in the manner above described.

The practical use of the preceding investigation is, to moderate the confidence with which inferences are frequently drawn with respect to the rate of profit from evidence regarding the rate of interest; and to show that although the rate of profit is one of the elements which combine to determine the rate of interest, the latter is also acted upon by causes peculiar to itself, and may either rise or fall, both temporarily and permanently, while the general rate of profits remains unchanged.

The introduction of banks, which perform the function of lenders and loan-brokers, with or without that of issuers of paper-money, produces some further anomalies in the rate of interest, which have not, so far as we are aware, been hitherto brought within the pale of exact science.

If bankers were merely a class of middlemen between the lender and the borrower; if they merely received deposits of capital from those who had it lying unemployed in their hands, and lent this, together with their own capital, to the productive classes, receiving interest for it, and paying interest in their turn to those who had placed capital in their hands; the effect of the operations of bank.

ing on the rate of interest would be to lower it in some slight degree. The banker receives and collects together sums of money much too small, when taken individually, to render it worth while for the owners to look out for an investment, but which in the aggregate form a considerable amount. This amount may be considered a clear addition to the productive capital of the country ; at least, to the capital in activity at any moment. And as this addition to the capital accrues wholly to that part of it which is not employed by the owners, but lent to other producers, the natural effect is a diminution of the rate of interest.

The banker, to the extent of his own private capital (the expenses of his business being first paid), is a lender at interest. But, being subject to risk and trouble fully equal to that which belongs to most other employments, he cannot be satisfied with the mere interest even of his whole capital : he must have the ordinary profits of stock, or he will not engage in the business : the state of banking must be such as to hold out to him the prospect of adding, to the interest of what remains of his own capital after paying the expenses of his business, interest upon capital deposited with him, in sufficient amount to make up, after paying the expenses, the ordinary profit which could be derived from his own capital in any productive employment. This will be accomplished in one of two ways.

1. If the circumstances of society are such as to furnish a ready investment of disposable capital (as for instance in London, where the public funds and other securities, of undoubted stability, and affording great advantages for receiving the interest without trouble and realizing the principal without difficulty when required, tempt all persons who have sums of importance lying idle, to invest them on their own account without the intervention of any middleman) ; the deposits with bankers consist chiefly of small sums likely to be wanted in a very short period for

current expenses, and the interest on which would seldom be worth the trouble of calculating it. Bankers, therefore, do not allow any interest on their deposits. After paying the expenses of their business, all the rest of the interest they receive is clear gain. But as the circumstances of banking, as of all other modes of employing capital, will on the average be such as to afford to a person entering into the business a prospect of realizing the ordinary, and no more than the ordinary, profits upon his own capital; the gains of each banker by the investment of his deposits, will not on the average exceed what is necessary to make up his gains on his own capital to the ordinary rate. It is, of course, competition which brings about this limitation. Whether competition operates by lowering the rate of interest, or by dividing the business among a larger number, it is difficult to decide. Probably it operates in both ways; but it is by no means impossible that it may operate in the latter way alone: just as an increase in the number of physicians does not lower the fees, though it diminishes an average competitor's chance of obtaining them.

It is not impossible that the disposition of the lenders might be such, that they would cease to lend rather than acquiesce in any reduction of the rate of interest. If so, the arrival of a new lender, in the person of a banker of deposit, would not lower the rate of interest in any considerable degree. A slight fall would take place, and with that exception things would be as before, except that the capital in the hands of the banker would have put itself into the place of an equal portion of capital belonging to other lenders, who would themselves have engaged in business (*e.g.*, by subscribing to some joint-stock company, or entering into commandite). Bankers' profits would then be limited to the ordinary rate chiefly by the division of the business among many banks, so that each on the average would receive no more interest on his deposits than

would suffice to make up the interest on his own capital to the ordinary rate of profit after paying all expenses.

2. But if the circumstances of society render it difficult and inconvenient for persons who wish to live upon the interest of their money, to seek an investment for themselves, the bankers become agents for this specific purpose : large as well as small sums are deposited with them, and they allow interest to their customers. Such is the practice of the Scotch banks, and of most of the country banks in England. Their customers, not living at any of the great seats of money transactions, prefer intrusting their capital to somebody on the spot, whom they know, and in whom they confide. He invests their money on the best terms he can, and pays to them such interest as he can afford to give ; retaining a compensation for his own risk and trouble. This compensation is fixed by the competition of the market. The rate of interest is no further lowered by this operation, than inasmuch as it brings together the lender and the borrower in a safe and expeditious manner. The lender incurs less risk, and a larger proportion, therefore, of the holders of capital are willing to be lenders.

When a banker, in addition to his other functions, is also an issuer of paper money, he gains an advantage similar to that which the London bankers derive from their deposits. To the extent to which he can put forth his notes, he has so much the more to lend, without himself having to pay any interest for it.

If the paper is convertible, it cannot get into circulation permanently without displacing specie, which goes abroad and brings back an equivalent value. To the extent of this value, there is an increase of the capital of the country ; and the increase accrues solely to that part of the capital which is employed in loans.

If the paper is inconvertible, and instead of displacing specie depreciates the currency, the banker by issuing it

levies a tax on every person who has money in his hands or due to him. He thus appropriates to himself a portion of the capital of other people, and a portion of their revenue. The capital might have been intended to be lent, or it might have been intended to be employed by the owner : such part of it as was intended to be employed by the owner now changes its destination, and is lent. The revenue was either intended to be accumulated, in which case it had already become capital, or it was intended to be spent : in this last case, revenue is converted into capital : and thus, strange as it may appear, the depreciation of the currency, when effected in this way, operates to a certain extent as a forced accumulation. This, indeed, is no palliation of its iniquity. Though A might have spent his property unproductively, B ought not to be permitted to rob him of it because B will expend it on productive labour.

In any supposable case, however, the issue of paper money by bankers increases the proportion of the whole capital of the country which is destined to be lent. The rate of interest must therefore fall, until some of the lenders give over lending, or until the increase of borrowers absorbs the whole.

But a fall of the rate of interest, sufficient to enable the money market to absorb the whole of the paper-loans, may not be sufficient to reduce the profits of a lender who lends what costs him nothing, to the ordinary rate of profit upon his capital. Here, therefore, competition will operate chiefly by dividing the business. The notes of each bank will be confined within so narrow a district, or will divide the supply of a district with so many other banks, that on the average each will receive no larger amount of interest on his notes than will make up the interest on his own capital to the ordinary rate of profit.

Even in this way, however, the competition has the effect, to a certain limited extent, of lowering the rate

of interest ; for the power of bankers to receive interest on more than their capital attracts a greater amount of capital into the banking business than would otherwise flow into it ; and this greater capital being all lent, interest will fall in consequence.

ESSAY V.

ON THE DEFINITION OF POLITICAL ECONOMY; AND ON THE METHOD OF INVESTIGATION PROPER TO IT.¹

IT might be imagined, on a superficial view of the nature and objects of definition, that the definition of a science would occupy the same place in the chronological which it commonly does in the didactic order. As a treatise on any science usually commences with an attempt to express, in a brief formula, what the science is, and wherein it differs from other sciences, so, it might be supposed, did the framing of such a formula naturally precede the successful cultivation of the science.

This, however, is far from having been the case. The definition of a science has almost invariably not preceded, but followed, the creation of the science itself. Like the wall of a city, it has usually been erected, not to be a receptacle for such edifices as might afterwards spring up, but to circumscribe an aggregation already in existence. Mankind did not measure out the ground for intellectual cultivation before they began to plant it; they did not divide the field of human investigation into regular compartments first, and then begin to collect truths for the

¹ This fifth essay was originally published in advance of the other four, viz., in the "Westminster Review" of October, 1836. Here the latter part of the title ran: "the Method of Philosophical Investigation in that Science."—ED.

purpose of being therein deposited; they proceeded in a less systematic manner. As discoveries were gathered in, either one by one, or in groups resulting from the continued prosecution of some uniform course of inquiry, the truths which were successively brought into store cohered and became agglomerated according to their individual affinities. Without any intentional classification, the facts classed themselves. They became associated in the mind, according to their general and obvious resemblances; and the aggregates thus formed, having to be frequently spoken of as aggregates, came to be denoted by a common name. Any body of truths which had thus acquired a collective denomination was called a *science*. It was long before this fortuitous classification was felt not to be sufficiently precise. It was in a more advanced stage of the progress of knowledge that mankind became sensible of the advantage of ascertaining whether the facts which they had thus grouped together were distinguished from all other facts by any common properties, and what these were. The first attempts to answer this question were commonly very unskilful, and the consequent definitions extremely imperfect.

And, in truth, there is scarcely any investigation in the whole body of a science requiring so high a degree of analysis and abstraction, as the inquiry, what the science itself is; in other words, what are the properties common to all the truths composing it, and distinguishing them from all other truths. Many persons, accordingly, who are profoundly conversant with the details of a science, would be very much at a loss to supply such a definition of the science itself as should not be liable to well-grounded logical objections. From this remark, we cannot except the authors of elementary scientific treatises. The definitions which those works furnish of the sciences, for the most part either do not fit them—some being too wide, some too

narrow—or do not go deep enough into them, but define a science by its accidents, not its essentials ; by some one of its properties which may, indeed, serve the purpose of a distinguishing mark, but which is of too little importance to have ever of itself led mankind to give the science a name and rank as a separate object of study.

The definition of a science must, indeed, be placed among that class of truths which Dugald Stewart had in view, when he observed that the first principles of all sciences belong to the philosophy of the human mind. The observation is just ; and the first principles of all sciences, including the definitions of them, have consequently participated hitherto in the vagueness and uncertainty which has pervaded that most difficult and unsettled of all branches of knowledge. If we open any book, even of mathematics or natural philosophy, it is impossible not to be struck with the mistiness of what we find represented as preliminary and fundamental notions, and the very insufficient manner in which the propositions which are palmed upon us as first principles seem to be made out, contrasted with the lucidity of the explanations and the conclusiveness of the proofs as soon as the writer enters upon the details of his subject. Whence comes this anomaly ? Why is the admitted certainty of the results of those sciences in no way prejudiced by the want of solidity in their premises ? How happens it that a firm superstructure has been erected upon an unstable foundation ? The solution of the paradox is, that what are called first principles, are in truth, *last* principles. Instead of being the fixed point from whence the chain of proof which supports all the rest of the science hangs suspended, they are themselves the remotest link of the chain. Though presented as if all other truths were to be deduced from them, they are the truths which are last arrived at ; the result of the last stage of generalization, or of the last and subtlest process of analysis, to which the particular

truths of the science can be subjected; those particular truths having previously been ascertained by the evidence proper to their own nature.

Like other sciences, Political Economy has remained destitute of a definition framed on strictly logical principles, or even of, what is more easily to be had, a definition exactly co-extensive with the thing defined. This has not, perhaps, caused the real bounds of the science to be, in this country at least, practically mistaken or overpassed; but it has occasioned—perhaps we should rather say it is connected with—indefinite, and often erroneous, conceptions of the mode in which the science should be studied.

We proceed to verify these assertions by an examination of the most generally received definitions of the science.

1. First, as to the vulgar notion of the nature and object of Political Economy, we shall not be wide of the mark if we state it to be something to this effect: That Political Economy is a science which teaches, or professes to teach, in what manner a nation may be made rich. This notion of what constitutes the science, is in some degree countenanced by the title and arrangement which Adam Smith gave to his invaluable work. A systematic treatise on Political Economy, he chose to call an “Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations;” and the topics are introduced in an order suitable to that view of the purpose of his book.

With respect to the definition in question, if definition it can be called which is not found in any set form of words, but left to be arrived at by a process of abstraction from a hundred current modes of speaking on the subject; it seems liable to the conclusive objection, that it confounds the essentially distinct, though closely connected, ideas of *science* and *art*. These two ideas differ from one another

as the understanding differs from the will, or as the indicative mood in grammar differs from the imperative. The one deals in facts, the other in precepts. Science is a collection of *truths*; art, a body of *rules*, or directions for conduct. The language of science is, This is, or, This is not; This does, or does not, happen. The language of art is, Do this; Avoid that. Science takes cognizance of a *phenomenon*, and endeavours to discover its *law*; art proposes to itself an *end*, and looks out for *means* to effect it.

If, therefore, Political Economy be a science, it cannot be a collection of practical rules; though, unless it be altogether a useless science, practical rules must be capable of being founded upon it. The science of mechanics, a branch of natural philosophy, lays down the laws of motion, and the properties of what are called the mechanical powers. The art of practical mechanics teaches how we may avail ourselves of those laws and properties, to increase our command over external nature. An art would not be an art, unless it were founded upon a scientific knowledge of the properties of the subject-matter: without this, it would not be philosophy, but empiricism; *ἐμπειρία*, not *τέχνη*, in Plato's sense. Rules, therefore, for making a nation increase in wealth, are not a science, but they are the results of science. Political Economy does not of itself instruct how to make a nation rich; but whoever would be qualified to judge of the means of making a nation rich, must first be a political economist.

2. The definition most generally received among instructed persons, and laid down in the commencement of most of the professed treatises on the subject, is to the following effect: That Political Economy informs us of the laws which regulate the production, distribution, and consumption of wealth. To this definition is frequently appended a familiar illustration. Political Economy, it

is said, is to the state, what domestic economy is to the family.¹

This definition is free from the fault which we pointed out in the former one. It distinctly takes notice that Political Economy is a science and not an art; that it is conversant with laws of nature, not with maxims of conduct, and teaches us how things take place of themselves, not in what manner it is advisable for us to shape them, in order to attain some particular end.

But though the definition is, with regard to this particular point, unobjectionable, so much can scarcely be said for the accompanying illustration; which rather sends back the mind to the current loose notion of Political Economy already disposed of. Political Economy is really, and is stated in the definition to be, a science: but domestic economy, so far as it is capable of being reduced to principles, is an art. It consists of rules, or maxims of prudence, for keeping the family regularly supplied with what its wants require, and securing, with any given amount of means, the greatest possible quantity of physical comfort and enjoyment. Undoubtedly the beneficial *result*, the great practical *application* of Political Economy, would be to accomplish for a nation something like what the most perfect domestic economy accomplishes for a single household: but supposing this purpose realized, there would be the same difference between the rules by which it might be effected, and Political Economy, which there is between the art of gunnery and the theory of projectiles, or between the rules of mathematical land-surveying and the science of trigonometry.

The definition, though not liable to the same objection

¹ This is James Mill's definition. His first sentence in the "Introduction" to his "Elements of Political Economy" is: "Political Economy is to the State what domestic economy is to the family" (3rd ed., p. 1).—ED.

as the illustration which is annexed to it, is itself far from unexceptionable. To neither of them, considered as standing at the head of a treatise, have we much to object. At a very early age in the study of the science, anything more accurate would be useless, and therefore pedantic. In a merely initiatory definition, scientific precision is not required: the object is, to insinuate into the learner's mind, it is scarcely material by what means, some general pre-conception of what are the uses of the pursuit, and what the series of topics through which he is about to travel. As a mere anticipation or *ébauche* of a definition, intended to indicate to a learner as much as he is able to understand before he begins, of the nature of what is about to be taught to him, we do not quarrel with the received formula. But if it claims to be admitted as that complete *definitio* or boundary-line, which results from a thorough exploring of the whole extent of the subject, and is intended to mark the exact place of Political Economy among the sciences, its pretension cannot be allowed.

“The science of the laws which regulate the production, distribution, and consumption of wealth.” The term wealth is surrounded by a haze of floating and vapoury associations, which will let nothing that is seen through them be shewn distinctly. Let us supply its place by a periphrasis. Wealth is defined, all objects useful or agreeable to mankind, except such as can be obtained in indefinite quantity without labour. Instead of all objects, some authorities say, all material objects: the distinction is of no moment for the present purpose.

To confine ourselves to production: if the laws of the production of all objects, or even of all material objects, which are useful or agreeable to mankind, were comprised in Political Economy, it would be difficult to say where the science would end: at the least, all or nearly all physical knowledge would be included in it. Corn and

cattle are material objects, in a high degree useful to mankind. The laws of the production of the one include the principles of agriculture; the production of the other is the subject of the art of cattle-breeding, which, in so far as really an art, must be built upon the science of physiology. The laws of the production of manufactured articles involve the whole of chemistry and the whole of mechanics. The laws of the production of the wealth which is extracted from the bowels of the earth, cannot be set forth without taking in a large part of geology.

When a definition so manifestly surpasses in extent what it professes to define, we must suppose that it is not meant to be interpreted literally, though the limitations with which it is to be understood are not stated.

Perhaps it will be said, that Political Economy is conversant with such only of the laws of the production of wealth as are applicable to *all* kinds of wealth: those which relate to the details of particular trades or employments forming the subject of other and totally distinct sciences.

If, however, there were no more in the distinction between Political Economy and physical science than this, the distinction, we may venture to affirm, would never have been made. No similar division exists in any other department of knowledge. We do not break up zoology or mineralogy into two parts; one treating of the properties common to all animals, or to all minerals; another conversant with the properties peculiar to each particular species of animals or minerals. The reason is obvious; there is no distinction *in kind* between the general laws of animal or of mineral nature and the peculiar properties of particular species. There is as close an analogy between the general laws and the particular ones, as there is between one of the general laws and another: most commonly,

indeed, the particular laws are but the complex result of a plurality of general laws modifying each other. A separation, therefore, between the general laws and the particular ones, merely because the former are general and the latter particular, would run counter both to the strongest motives of convenience and to the natural tendencies of the mind. If the case is different with the laws of the production of wealth, it must be because, in this case, the general laws differ in kind from the particular ones. But if so, the difference in kind is the radical distinction, and we should find out what that is, and found our definition upon it.

But, further, the recognised boundaries which separate the field of Political Economy from that of physical science, by no means correspond with the distinction between the truths which concern all kinds of wealth and those which relate only to some kinds. The three laws of motion, and the law of gravitation, are common, as far as human observation has yet extended, to all matter; and these, therefore, as being among the laws of the production of all wealth, should form part of Political Economy. There are hardly any of the processes of industry which do not partly depend upon the properties of the lever; but it would be a strange classification which included those properties among the truths of Political Economy. Again, the latter science has many inquiries altogether as special, and relating as exclusively to particular sorts of material objects, as any of the branches of physical science. The investigation of some of the circumstances which regulate the price of corn, has as little to do with the laws common to the production of all wealth, as any part of the knowledge of the agriculturist. The inquiry into the rent of mines or fisheries, or into the value of the precious metals, elicits truths which have immediate reference to the production solely of a peculiar kind of wealth; yet

these are admitted to be correctly placed in the science of Political Economy.

The real distinction between Political Economy and physical science must be sought in something deeper than the nature of the subject-matter; which, indeed, is for the most part common to both. Political Economy, and the scientific grounds of all the useful arts, have in truth one and the same subject-matter; namely, the objects which conduce to man's convenience and enjoyment: but they are, nevertheless, perfectly distinct branches of knowledge.

3. If we contemplate the whole field of human knowledge, attained or attainable, we find that it separates itself obviously, and as it were spontaneously, into two divisions, which stand so strikingly in opposition and contradistinction to one another, that in all classifications of our knowledge they have been kept apart. These are, *physical* science, and *moral* or psychological science. The difference between these two departments of our knowledge does not reside in the subject-matter with which they are conversant: for although, of the simplest and most elementary parts of each, it may be said, with an approach to truth, that they are concerned with different subject-matters—namely, the one with the human mind, the other with all things whatever except the mind; this distinction does not hold between the higher regions of the two. Take the science of politics, for instance, or that of law: who will say that these are physical sciences? and yet is it not obvious that they are conversant fully as much with matter as with mind? Take, again, the theory of music, of painting, of any other of the fine arts, and who will venture to pronounce that the facts they are conversant with belong either wholly to the class of matter, or wholly to that of mind?

The following seems to be the *rationale* of the distinction between physical and moral science.

In all the intercourse of man with nature, whether we consider him as acting upon it, or as receiving impressions from it, the effect or phenomenon depends upon causes of two kinds: the properties of the object acting, and those of the object acted upon. Everything which can possibly happen in which man and external things are jointly concerned, results from the joint operation of a law or laws of matter, and a law or laws of the human mind. Thus the production of corn by human labour is the result of a law of mind, and many laws of matter. The laws of matter are those properties of the soil and of vegetable life which cause the seed to germinate in the ground, and those properties of the human body which render food necessary to its support. The law of mind is, that man desires to possess subsistence, and consequently wills the necessary means of procuring it.

Laws of mind and laws of matter are so dissimilar in their nature, that it would be contrary to all principles of rational arrangement to mix them up as part of the same study. In all scientific methods, therefore, they are placed apart. Any compound effect or phenomenon which depends both on the properties of matter and on those of mind, may thus become the subject of two completely distinct sciences, or branches of science; one, treating of the phenomenon in so far as it depends upon the laws of matter only; the other treating of it in so far as it depends upon the laws of mind.

The physical sciences are those which treat of the laws of matter, and of all complex phenomena in so far as dependent upon the laws of matter. The mental or moral sciences are those which treat of the laws of mind, and of all complex phenomena in so far as dependent upon the laws of mind.

Most of the moral sciences presuppose physical science; but few of the physical sciences presuppose moral science.

The reason is obvious. There are many phenomena (an earthquake, for example, or the motions of the planets) which depend upon the laws of matter exclusively; and have nothing whatever to do with the laws of mind. Many, therefore, of the physical sciences may be treated of without any reference to mind, and as if the mind existed as a recipient of knowledge only, not as a cause producing effects. But there are no phenomena which depend exclusively upon the laws of mind; even the phenomena of the mind itself being partially dependent upon the physiological laws of the body. All the mental sciences, therefore, not excepting the pure science of mind, must take account of a great variety of physical truths; and (as physical science is commonly and very properly studied first) may be said to presuppose them, taking up the complex phenomena where physical science leaves them.

Now this, it will be found, is a precise statement of the relation in which Political Economy stands to the various sciences which are tributary to the arts of production.

The laws of the production of the objects which constitute wealth, are the subject-matter both of Political Economy and of almost all the physical sciences. Such, however, of those laws as are purely laws of matter, belong to physical science, and to that exclusively. Such of them as are laws of the human mind, and no others, belong to Political Economy, which finally sums up the result of both combined.

Political Economy, therefore, presupposes all the physical sciences; it takes for granted all such of the truths of those sciences as are concerned in the production of the objects demanded by the wants of mankind; or at least it takes for granted that the physical part of the process takes place somehow. It then inquires what are the phenomena of *mind* which are concerned in the production

and distribution¹ of those same objects; it borrows from the pure science of mind the laws of those phenomena, and inquires what effects follow from these mental laws, acting in concurrence with those physical ones.²

From the above considerations the following seems to come out as the correct and complete definition of Political Economy: "The science which treats of the production and distribution of wealth, so far as they depend upon the laws of human nature." Or thus—"The science relating to the moral or psychological laws of the production and distribution of wealth."

¹ We say, the *production* and *distribution*, not, as is usual with writers on this science, the production, distribution, and *consumption*. For we contend that Political Economy, as conceived by those very writers, has nothing to do with the consumption of wealth, further than as the consideration of it is inseparable from that of production, or from that of distribution. We know not of any *laws* of the *consumption* of wealth as the subject of a distinct science: they can be no other than the laws of human enjoyment. Political economists have never treated of consumption on its own account, but always for the purpose of the inquiry in what manner different kinds of consumption affect the production and distribution of wealth. Under the head of Consumption, in professed treatises on the science, the following are the subjects treated of: 1st, The distinction between *productive* and *unproductive* consumption; 2nd, The inquiry whether it is possible for *too much* wealth to be *produced*, and for too great a portion of what has been produced to be applied to the purpose of further *production*; 3rd, The theory of taxation, that is to say, the following two questions—by whom each particular tax is paid (a question of *distribution*), and in what manner particular taxes affect *production*.

² The physical laws of the production of useful objects are all equally presupposed by the science of Political Economy: most of them, however, it presupposes in the gross, seeming to say nothing about them. A few (such, for instance, as the decreasing ratio in which the produce of the soil is increased by an increased application of labour) it is obliged particularly to specify, and thus seems to borrow those truths from the physical sciences to which they properly belong, and include them among its own.

For popular use this definition is amply sufficient, but it still falls short of the complete accuracy required for the purposes of the philosopher. Political Economy does not treat of the production and distribution of wealth in all states of mankind, but only in what is termed the social state; nor so far as they depend upon the laws of human nature, but only so far as they depend upon a certain portion of those laws. This, at least, is the view which must be taken of Political Economy, if we mean it to find any place in an encyclopedical division of the field of science. On any other view, it either is not science at all, or it is several sciences. This will appear clearly, if, on the one hand, we take a general survey of the moral sciences, with a view to assign the exact place of Political Economy among them; while, on the other, we consider attentively the nature of the methods or processes by which the truths which are the object of those sciences are arrived at.

Man, who, considered as a being having a moral or mental nature, is the subject-matter of all the moral sciences, may, with reference to that part of his nature, form the subject of philosophical inquiry under several distinct hypotheses. We may inquire what belongs to man considered individually, and as if no human being existed besides himself; we may next consider him as coming into contact with other individuals; and finally, as living in a state of *society*, that is, forming part of a body or aggregation of human beings, systematically co-operating for common purposes. Of this last state, political government, or subjection to a common superior, is an ordinary ingredient, but forms no necessary part of the conception, and, with respect to our present purpose, needs not be further adverted to.

Those laws or properties of human nature which appertain to man as a mere individual, and do not presuppose,

as a necessary condition, the existence of other individuals (except, perhaps, as mere instruments or means), form a part of the subject of pure mental philosophy. They comprise all the laws of the mere intellect, and those of the purely self-regarding desires.

Those laws of human nature which relate to the feelings called forth in a human being by other individual human or intelligent beings, as such; namely, the *affections*, the *conscience*, or feeling of duty, and the love of *approbation*; and to the conduct of man, so far as it depends upon, or has relation to, these parts of his nature—form the subject of another portion of pure mental philosophy, namely, that portion of it on which *morals*, or *ethics*, are founded. For morality itself is not a science, but an art; not truths, but rules. The truths on which the rules are founded are drawn (as is the case in all arts) from a variety of sciences; but the principal of them, and those which are most nearly peculiar to this particular art, belong to a branch of the science of mind.

Finally, there are certain principles of human nature which are peculiarly connected with the ideas and feelings generated in man by living in a state of *society*, that is, by forming part of a union or aggregation of human beings for a common purpose or purposes. Few, indeed, of the elementary laws of the human mind are peculiar to this state, almost all being called into action in the two other states. But those simple laws of human nature, operating in that wider field, give rise to results of a sufficiently universal character, and even (when compared with the still more complex phenomena of which they are the determining causes) sufficiently simple, to admit of being called, though in a somewhat looser sense, *laws* of society, or laws of human nature in the social state. These laws, or general truths, form the subject of a branch of science which may be aptly designated from the title of *social*

economy; somewhat less happily by that of *speculative politics*, or the *science* of politics, as contradistinguished from the art. This science stands in the same relation to the social, as anatomy and physiology to the physical body. It shows by what principles of his nature man is induced to enter into a state of society; how this feature in his position acts upon his interests and feelings, and through them upon his conduct; how the association tends progressively to become closer, and the co-operation extends itself to more and more purposes; what those purposes are, and what the varieties of means most generally adopted for furthering them; what are the various relations which establish themselves among human beings as the ordinary consequence of the social union; what those which are different in different states of society; in what historical order those states tend to succeed one another; and what are the effects of each upon the conduct and character of man.

This branch of science, whether we prefer to call it social economy, speculative politics, or the natural history of society, presupposes the whole science of the nature of the individual mind; since all the laws of which the latter science takes cognizance are brought into play in a state of society, and the truths of the social science are but statements of the manner in which those simple laws take effect in complicated circumstances. Pure mental philosophy, therefore, is an essential part, or preliminary, of political philosophy. The science of social economy embraces every part of man's nature, in so far as influencing the conduct or condition of man in society; and therefore may it be termed speculative politics, as being the scientific foundation of practical politics, or the art of government, of which the art of legislation is a part.¹

¹ The *science* of legislation is an incorrect and misleading expression. Legislation is *making laws*. We do not talk of the

It is to *this* important division of the field of science that one of the writers who have most correctly conceived and copiously illustrated its nature and limits,—we mean M. Say,—has chosen to give the name Political Economy. And, indeed, this large extension of the signification of that term is countenanced by its etymology. But the words “political economy” have long ceased to have so large a meaning. Every writer is entitled to use the words which are his tools in the manner which he judges most conducive to the general purposes of the exposition of truth; but he exercises this discretion under liability to criticism: and M. Say seems to have done in this instance, what should never be done without strong reasons; to have altered the meaning of a name which was appropriated to a particular purpose (and for which, therefore, a substitute must be provided), in order to transfer it to an object for which it was easy to find a more characteristic denomination.

What is now commonly understood by the term “Political Economy” is not the science of speculative politics, but a branch of that science. It does not treat of the whole of man’s nature as modified by the social state, nor of the whole conduct of man in society. It is concerned with him solely as a being who desires to possess wealth, and who is capable of judging of the comparative efficacy of means for obtaining that end. It predicts only such of the phenomena of the social state as take place in consequence of the pursuit of wealth. It makes entire

science of making anything. Even the *science of government* would be an objectionable expression, were it not that *government* is often loosely taken to signify, not the act of governing, but the state or condition of *being governed*, or of living under a government. A preferable expression would be, the science of *political society*; a principal branch of the more extensive science of society, characterized in the text.

abstraction of every other human passion or motive; except those which may be regarded as perpetually antagonizing principles to the desire of wealth, namely, aversion to labour, and desire of the present enjoyment of costly indulgences. These it takes, to a certain extent, into its calculations, because these do not merely, like other desires, occasionally conflict with the pursuit of wealth, but accompany it always as a drag, or impediment, and are therefore inseparably mixed up in the consideration of it. Political Economy considers mankind as occupied solely in acquiring and consuming wealth; and aims at showing what is the course of action into which mankind, living in a state of society, would be impelled, if that motive, except in the degree in which it is checked by the two perpetual counter-motives above adverted to, were absolute ruler of all their actions. Under the influence of this desire, it shows mankind accumulating wealth, and employing that wealth in the production of other wealth; sanctioning by mutual agreement the institution of property; establishing laws to prevent individuals from encroaching upon the property of others by force or fraud; adopting various contrivances for increasing the productiveness of their labour; settling the division of the produce by agreement, under the influence of competition (competition itself being governed by certain laws, which laws are therefore the ultimate regulators of the division of the produce); and employing certain expedients (as money, credit, etc.) to facilitate the distribution. All these operations, though many of them are really the result of a plurality of motives, are considered by Political Economy as flowing solely from the desire of wealth. The science then proceeds to investigate the laws which govern these several operations, under the supposition that man is a being who is determined, by the necessity of his nature, to prefer a greater portion of wealth to a smaller in all

cases, without any other exception than that constituted by the two counter-motives already specified. Not that any political economist was ever so absurd as to suppose that mankind are really thus constituted, but because this is the mode in which science must necessarily proceed. When an effect depends upon a concurrence of causes, those causes must be studied one at a time, and their laws separately investigated, if we wish, through the causes, to obtain the power of either predicting or controlling the effect; since the law of the effect is compounded of the laws of all the causes which determine it. The law of the centripetal and that of the tangential force must have been known before the motions of the earth and planets could be explained, or many of them predicted. The same is the case with the conduct of man in society. In order to judge how he will act under the variety of desires and aversions which are concurrently operating upon him, we must know how he would act under the exclusive influence of each one in particular. There is, perhaps, no action of a man's life in which he is neither under the immediate nor under the remote influence of any impulse but the mere desire of wealth. With respect to those parts of human conduct of which wealth is not even the principal object, to these Political Economy does not pretend that its conclusions are applicable. But there are also certain departments of human affairs, in which the acquisition of wealth is the main and acknowledged end. It is only of these that Political Economy takes notice. The manner in which it necessarily proceeds is that of treating the main and acknowledged end as if it were the sole end; which, of all hypotheses equally simple, is the nearest to the truth. The political economist inquires, what are the actions which would be produced by this desire, if, within the departments in question, it were unimpeded by any other. In this way a nearer approximation is obtained

than would otherwise be practicable, to the real order of human affairs in those departments. This approximation is then to be corrected by making proper allowance for the effects of any impulses of a different description, which can be shown to interfere with the result in any particular case. Only in a few of the most striking cases (such as the important one of the principle of population) are these corrections interpolated into the expositions of Political Economy itself; the strictness of purely scientific arrangement being thereby somewhat departed from, for the sake of practical utility. So far as it is known, or may be presumed, that the conduct of mankind in the pursuit of wealth is under the collateral influence of any other of the properties of our nature than the desire of obtaining the greatest quantity of wealth with the least labour and self-denial, the conclusions of Political Economy will so far fail of being applicable to the explanation or prediction of real events, until they are modified by a correct allowance for the degree of influence exercised by the other cause.

Political Economy, then, may be defined as follows; and the definition seems to be complete :

“The science which traces the laws of such of the phenomena of society as arise from the combined operations of mankind for the production of wealth, in so far as those phenomena are not modified by the pursuit of any other object.”

But while this is a correct definition of Political Economy as a portion of the field of science, the didactic writer on the subject will naturally combine in his exposition, with the truths of the pure science, as many of the practical modifications as will, in his estimation, be most conducive to the usefulness of his work.

The above attempt to frame a stricter definition of the science than what are commonly received as such, may be

thought to be of little use ; or, at best, to be chiefly useful in a general survey and classification of the sciences, rather than as conducing to the more successful pursuit of the particular science in question. We think otherwise, and for this reason ; that, with the consideration of the definition of a science, is inseparably connected that of the *philosophic method* of the science ; the nature of the process by which its investigations are to be carried on, its truths to be arrived at.

Now, in whatever science there are systematic differences of opinion—which is as much as to say, in all the moral or mental sciences, and in Political Economy among the rest ; in whatever science there exist, among those who have attended to the subject, what are commonly called differences of principle, as distinguished from differences of matter-of-fact or detail,—the cause will be found to be, a difference in their conceptions of the philosophic method of the science. The parties who differ are guided, either knowingly or unconsciously, by different views concerning the nature of the evidence appropriate to the subject. They differ not solely in what they believe themselves to see, but in the quarter whence they obtained the light by which they think they see it.

The most universal of the forms in which this difference of method is accustomed to present itself, is the ancient feud between what is called theory, and what is called practice or experience. There are, on social and political questions, two kinds of reasoners : there is one portion who term themselves practical men, and call the others theorists ; a title which the latter do not reject, though they by no means recognize it as peculiar to them. The distinction between the two is a very broad one, though it is one of which the language employed is a most incorrect exponent. It has been again and again demonstrated, that those who are accused of despising facts and disregarding

experience build and profess to build wholly upon facts and experience ; while those who disavow theory cannot make one step without theorizing. But, although both classes of inquirers do nothing but theorize, and both of them consult no other guide than experience, there is this difference between them, and a most important difference it is : that those who are called practical men require *specific* experience, and argue wholly *upwards* from particular facts to a general conclusion ; while those who are called theorists aim at embracing a wider field of experience, and, having argued upwards from particular facts to a general principle including a much wider range than that of the question under discussion, then argue *downwards* from that general principle to a variety of specific conclusions.

Suppose, for example, that the question were, whether absolute kings were likely to employ the powers of government for the welfare or for the oppression of their subjects. The practicals would endeavour to determine this question by a direct induction from the conduct of particular despotic monarchs, as testified by history. The theorists would refer the question to be decided by the test not solely of our experience of kings, but of our experience of men. They would contend that an observation of the tendencies which nature has manifested in the variety of situations in which human beings have been placed, and especially observation of what passes in our own minds, warrants us in inferring that a human being in the situation of a despotic king will make a bad use of power ; and that this conclusion would lose nothing of its certainty even if absolute kings had never existed, or if history furnished us with no information of the manner in which they had conducted themselves.

The first of these methods is a method of induction, merely ; the last a mixed method of induction and ratiocination. The first may be called the method *à posteriori* ;

the latter, the method *à priori*. We are aware that this last expression is sometimes used to characterize a supposed mode of philosophizing, which does not profess to be founded upon experience at all. But we are not acquainted with any mode of philosophizing, on political subjects at least, to which such a description is fairly applicable. By the method *à posteriori* we mean that which requires, as the basis of its conclusions, not experience merely, but specific experience. By the method *à priori* we mean (what has commonly been meant) reasoning from an assumed hypothesis; which is not a practice confined to mathematics, but is of the essence of all science which admits of general reason at all. To verify the hypothesis itself *à posteriori*, that is, to examine whether the facts of any actual case are in accordance with it, is no part of the business of science at all, but of the *application* of science.

In the definition which we have attempted to frame of the science of Political Economy, we have characterized it as essentially an *abstract* science, and its method as the method *à priori*. Such is undoubtedly its character as it has been understood and taught by all its most distinguished teachers. It reasons, and, as we contend, must necessarily reason, from assumptions, not from facts. It is built upon hypothesis, strictly analogous to those which, under the name of definitions, are the foundation of the other abstract sciences. Geometry presupposes an arbitrary definition of a line, "that which has length but not breadth." Just in the same manner does Political Economy presuppose an arbitrary definition of man, as a being who invariably does that by which he may obtain the greatest amount of necessities, conveniences, and luxuries, with the smallest quantity of labour and physical self-denial with which they can be obtained in the existing state of knowledge. It is true that this definition of man is not formally

prefixed to any work on Political Economy, as the definition of a line is prefixed to Euclid's Elements; and in proportion as by being so prefixed it would be less in danger of being forgotten, we may see ground for regret that this is not done. It is proper that what is assumed in every particular case, should once for all be brought before the mind in its full extent, by being somewhere formally stated as a general maxim. Now, no one who is conversant with systematic treatises on Political Economy will question, that whenever a political economist has shown that, by acting in a particular manner, a labourer may obviously obtain higher wages, a capitalist larger profits, or a landlord higher rent, he concludes, as a matter of course, that they will certainly act in that manner. Political Economy, therefore, reasons from *assumed* premises—from premises which might be totally without foundation in fact, and which are not pretended to be universally in accordance with it. The conclusions of Political Economy, consequently, like those of geometry, are only true, as the common phrase is, *in the abstract*; that is, they are only true under certain suppositions, in which none but general causes—causes common to the *whole class* of cases under consideration—are taken into the account.

This ought not to be denied by the political economist. If he deny it, then, and then only, he places himself in the wrong. The *à priori* method which is laid to his charge, as if his employment of it proved his whole science to be worthless, is, as we shall presently show, the only method by which truth can possibly be attained in any department of the social science. All that is requisite is, that he be on his guard not to ascribe to conclusions which are grounded upon an hypothesis a different kind of certainty from that which really belongs to them. They would be true without qualification, only in a case which is purely imaginary. In proportion as the actual facts recede

from the hypothesis, he must allow a corresponding deviation from the strict letter of his conclusion; otherwise it will be true only of things such as he has arbitrarily supposed, not of such things as really exist. That which is true in the abstract, is always true in the concrete with proper *allowances*. When a certain cause really exists, and if left to itself would infallibly produce a certain effect, that same effect, *modified* by all the other concurrent causes, will correctly correspond to the result really produced.

The conclusions of geometry are not strictly true of such lines, angles, and figures, as human hands can construct. But no one, therefore, contends that the conclusions of geometry are of no utility, or that it would be better to shut up Euclid's Elements, and content ourselves with "practice" and "experience."

No mathematician ever thought that his definition of a line corresponded to an actual line. As little did any political economist ever imagine that real men had no object of desire but wealth, or none which would not give way to the slightest motive of a pecuniary kind. But they were justified in assuming this, for the purposes of their argument; because they had to do only with those parts of human conduct which have pecuniary advantage for their direct and principal object; and because, as no two individual cases are exactly alike, no *general* maxims could ever be laid down unless *some* of the circumstances of the particular case were left out of consideration.

But we go farther than to affirm that the method *à priori* is a legitimate mode of philosophical investigation in the moral sciences: we contend that it is the only mode. We affirm that the method *à posteriori*, or that of specific experience, is altogether inefficacious in those sciences, as a means of arriving at any considerable body of valuable truth; though it admits of being usefully applied in aid of

the method *à priori*, and even forms an indispensable supplement to it.

There is a property common to almost all the moral sciences, and by which they are distinguished from many of the physical; this is, that it is seldom in our power to make experiments in them. In chemistry and natural philosophy, we can not only observe what happens under all the combinations of circumstances which nature brings together, but we may also try an indefinite number of new combinations. This we can seldom do in ethical, and scarcely ever in political science. We cannot try forms of government and systems of national policy on a diminutive scale in our laboratories, shaping our experiments as we think they may most conduce to the advancement of knowledge. We therefore study nature under circumstances of great disadvantage in these sciences; being confined to the limited number of experiments which take place (if we may so speak) of their own accord, without any preparation or management of ours; in circumstances, moreover, of great complexity, and never perfectly known to us; and with the far greater part of the processes concealed from our observation.

The consequence of this unavoidable defect in the materials of the induction is, that we can rarely obtain what Bacon has quaintly, but not unaptly, termed an *experimentum crucis*.

In any science which admits of an unlimited range of arbitrary experiments, an *experimentum crucis* may always be obtained. Being able to vary all the circumstances, we can always take effectual means of ascertaining which of them are, and which are not, material. Call the effect B, and let the question be whether the cause A in any way contributes to it. We try an experiment in which all the surrounding circumstances are altered, except A alone: if the effect B is nevertheless produced, A is the

cause of it. Or, instead of leaving A, and changing the other circumstances, we leave all the other circumstances and change A: if the effect B in that case does *not* take place, then again A is a necessary condition of its existence. Either of these experiments, if accurately performed, is an *experimentum crucis*; it converts the presumption we had before of the existence of a connection between A and B into proof, by negating every other hypothesis which would account for the appearances.

But this can seldom be done in the moral sciences, owing to the immense multitude of the influencing circumstances, and our very scanty means of varying the experiment. Even in operating upon an individual mind, which is the case affording greatest room for experimenting, we cannot often obtain a *crucial* experiment. The effect, for example, of a particular circumstance in education, upon the formation of character, may be tried in a variety of cases, but we can hardly ever be certain that any two of those cases differ in all their circumstances except the solitary one of which we wish to estimate the influence. In how much greater a degree must this difficulty exist in the affairs of states, where even the *number* of recorded experiments is so scanty in comparison with the variety and multitude of the circumstances concerned in each. How, for example, can we obtain a crucial experiment on the effect of a restrictive commercial policy upon national wealth? We must find two nations alike in every other respect, or at least possessed, in a degree exactly equal, of every thing which conduces to national opulence, and adopting exactly the same policy in all their other affairs, but differing in this only, that one of them adopts a system of commercial restrictions, and the other adopts free trade. This would be a decisive experiment, similar to those which we can almost always obtain in experimental physics. Doubtless this would be the most conclusive

evidence of all if we could get it. But let anyone consider how infinitely numerous and various are the circumstances which either directly or indirectly do or may influence the amount of the national wealth, and then ask himself what are the probabilities that in the longest revolution of ages two nations will be found, which agree, and can be shown to agree, in all those circumstances except one?

Since, therefore, it is vain to hope that truth can be arrived at, either in Political Economy or in any other department of the social science, while we look at the facts in the concrete, clothed in all the complexity with which nature has surrounded them, and endeavour to elicit a general law by a process of induction from a comparison of details; there remains no other method than the *à priori* one, or that of "abstract speculation."

Although sufficiently ample grounds are not afforded in the field of politics, for a satisfactory induction by a comparison of the effects, the causes may, in all cases, be made the subject of specific experiment. These causes are, laws of human nature, and external circumstances capable of exciting the human will to action. The desires of man, and the nature of the conduct to which they prompt him, are within the reach of our observation. We can also observe what are the objects which excite those desires. The materials of this knowledge everyone can principally collect within himself; with reasonable consideration of the differences, of which experience discloses to him the existence, between himself and other people. Knowing therefore accurately the properties of the substances concerned, we may reason with as much certainty as in the most demonstrative parts of physics from any assumed set of circumstances. This will be mere trifling if the assumed circumstances bear no sort of resemblance to any real ones; but if the assumption is correct as far as it goes, and differs from the truth no otherwise than as a part differs from the

whole, then the conclusions which are correctly deduced from the assumption constitute *abstract* truth; and when completed by adding or subtracting the effect of the non-calculated circumstances, they are true in the concrete, and may be applied to practice.

Of this character is the science of Political Economy in the writings of its best teachers. To render it perfect as an abstract science, the combinations of circumstances which it assumes, in order to trace their effects, should embody all the circumstances that are common to all cases whatever, and likewise all the circumstances that are common to any important class of cases. The conclusions correctly deduced from these assumptions, would be as true in the abstract as those of mathematics; and would be as near an approximation as abstract truth can ever be, to truth in the concrete.

When the principles of Political Economy are to be applied to a particular case, then it is necessary to take into account all the individual circumstances of that case; not only examining to which of the sets of circumstances contemplated by the abstract science the circumstances of the case in question correspond, but likewise what other circumstances may exist in that case, which not being common to it with any large and strongly-marked class of cases, have not fallen under the cognizance of the science. These circumstances have been called *disturbing causes*. And here only it is that an element of uncertainty enters into the process—an uncertainty inherent in the nature of these complex phenomena, and arising from the impossibility of being quite sure that all the circumstances of the particular case are known to us sufficiently in detail, and that our attention is not unduly diverted from any of them.

This constitutes the only uncertainty of Political Economy; and not of it alone, but of the moral sciences in general. When the disturbing causes are known, the

allowance necessary to be made for them detracts in no way from scientific precision, nor constitutes any deviation from the *à priori* method. The disturbing causes are not handed over to be dealt with by mere conjecture. Like *friction* in mechanics, to which they have been often compared, they may at first have been considered merely as a non-assignable deduction to be made by guess from the result given by the general principles of science; but in time many of them are brought within the pale of the abstract science itself, and their effect is found to admit of as accurate an estimation as those more striking effects which they modify. The disturbing causes have their laws, as the causes which are thereby disturbed have theirs; and from the laws of the disturbing causes, the nature and amount of the disturbance may be predicted *à priori*, like the operation of the more general laws which they are said to modify or disturb, but with which they might more properly be said to be concurrent. The effect of the special causes is then to be added to, or subtracted from, the effect of the general ones.

These disturbing causes are sometimes circumstances which operate upon human conduct through the same principle of human nature with which Political Economy is conversant, namely, the desire of wealth, but which are not general enough to be taken into account in the abstract science. Of disturbances of this description every political economist can produce many examples. In other instances the disturbing cause is some other law of human nature. In the latter case it never can fall within the province of Political Economy; it belongs to some other science; and here the mere political economist, he who has studied no science but Political Economy, if he attempt to apply his science to practice, will fail.¹

¹ One of the strongest reasons for drawing the line of separation clearly and broadly between science and art is the following:

As for the other kind of disturbing causes, namely those which operate through the same law of human nature out of which the general principles of the science arise, these might always be brought within the pale of the abstract science if it were worth while; and when we make the necessary allowances for them in practice, if we are doing anything but guess, we are following out the method of the abstract science into minuter details; inserting among its hypotheses a fresh and still more complex combination of circumstances, and so adding *pro hac vice* a supplementary chapter or appendix, or at least a supplementary theorem, to the abstract science.

Having now shown that the method *à priori* in Political Economy, and in all the other branches of moral science, is the only certain or scientific mode of investigation, and that the *à posteriori* method, or that of specific experience, as a means of arriving at truth, is inapplicable to these subjects, we shall be able to show that the latter method is notwithstanding of great value in the moral sciences; namely, not as a means of discovering truth, but of verifying it, and reducing to the lowest point that uncertainty before alluded

That the principle of classification in science most conveniently follows the classification of *causes*, while arts must necessarily be classified according to the classification of the *effects*, the production of which is their appropriate end. Now an effect, whether in physics or morals, commonly depends upon a concurrence of causes, and it frequently happens that several of these causes belong to different sciences. Thus in the construction of engines upon the principles of the science of *mechanics*, it is necessary to bear in mind the *chemical* properties of the material, such as its liability to oxydize; its electrical and magnetic properties, and so forth. From this it follows that although the necessary foundation of all art is science, that is, the knowledge of the properties or laws of the objects upon which, and with which, the art does its work; it is not equally true that every art corresponds to one particular science. Each art presupposes, not one science, but science in general; or, at least, many distinct sciences.

to as arising from the complexity of every particular case, and from the difficulty (not to say impossibility) of our being assured *à priori* that we have taken into account all the material circumstances.

If we could be quite certain that we knew all the facts of the particular case, we could derive little additional advantage from specific experience. The causes being given, we may know what will be their effect, without an actual trial of every possible combination; since the causes are human feelings, and outward circumstances fitted to excite them: and, as these for the most part are, or at least might be, familiar to us, we can more surely judge of their combined effect from that familiarity, than from any evidence which can be elicited from the complicated and entangled circumstances of an actual experiment. If the knowledge what are the particular causes operating in any given instance were revealed to us by infallible authority, then, if our abstract science were perfect, we should become prophets. But the causes are not so revealed: they are to be collected by observation; and observation in circumstances of complexity is apt to be imperfect. Some of the causes may lie beyond observation; many are apt to escape it, unless we are on the look-out for them; and it is only the habit of long and accurate observation which can give us so correct a preconception what causes we are likely to find, as shall induce us to look for them in the right quarter. But such is the nature of the human understanding, that the very fact of attending with intensity to one part of a thing, has a tendency to withdraw the attention from the other parts. We are consequently in great danger of adverting to a portion only of the causes which are actually at work. And if we are in this predicament, the more accurate our deductions and the more certain our conclusions in the abstract (that is, making abstraction of all circumstances except those which form part of the

hypothesis), the less we are likely to suspect that we are in error : for no one can have looked closely into the sources of fallacious thinking without being deeply conscious that the coherence, and neat concatenation of our philosophical systems, is more apt than we are commonly aware to pass with us as evidence of their truth.

We cannot, therefore, too carefully endeavour to verify our theory, by comparing, in the particular cases to which we have access, the results which it would have led us to predict, with the most trustworthy accounts we can obtain of those which have been actually realized. The discrepancy between our anticipations and the actual fact is often the only circumstance which would have drawn our attention to some important disturbing cause which we had overlooked. Nay, it often discloses to us errors in thought, still more serious than the omission of what can with any propriety be termed a disturbing cause. It often reveals to us that the basis itself of our whole argument is insufficient ; that the data, from which we had reasoned, comprise only a part, and not always the most important part, of the circumstances by which the result is really determined. Such oversights are committed by very good reasoners, and even by a still rarer class, that of good observers. It is a kind of error to which those are peculiarly liable whose views are the largest and most philosophical : for exactly in that ratio are their minds more accustomed to dwell upon those laws, qualities, and tendencies, which are common to large classes of cases, and which belong to all place and all time ; while it often happens that circumstances almost peculiar to the particular case or era have a far greater share in governing than one case.

Although, therefore, a philosopher be convinced that no general truths can be attained in the affairs of nations by the *à posteriori* road, it does not the less behove him, according to the measure of his opportunities, to sift and

scrutinize the details of every specific experiment. Without this, he may be an excellent professor of abstract science ; for a person may be of great use who points out correctly what effects will follow from certain combinations of possible circumstances, in whatever tract of the extensive region of hypothetical cases those combinations may be found. He stands in the same relation to the legislator, as the mere geographer to the practical navigator ; telling him the latitude and longitude of all sorts of places, but not how to find whereabouts he himself is sailing. If, however, he does no more than this, he must rest contented to take no share in practical politics ; to have no opinion, or to hold it with extreme modesty, on the applications which should be made of his doctrines to existing circumstances.

No one who attempts to lay down propositions for the guidance of mankind, however perfect his scientific acquirements, can dispense with a practical knowledge of the actual modes in which the affairs of the world are carried on, and an extensive personal experience of the actual ideas, feelings, and intellectual and moral tendencies of his own country and of his own age. The true practical statesman is he who combines this experience with a profound knowledge of abstract political philosophy. Either acquirement, without the other, leaves him lame and impotent if he is sensible of the deficiency ; renders him obstinate and presumptuous if, as is more probable, he is entirely unconscious of it.¹

¹ In the "Westminster Review" the author concluded this paragraph thus : "Knowledge of what is called history, so commonly regarded as the sole fountain of political experience, is useful only in the third degree. History by itself, if we knew it ten times better than we do, could, for the reasons already given, prove little or nothing ; but the study of it is a corrective to the narrow and exclusive views which are apt to be engendered by observation on a more limited scale. Those who never look back-

Such, then, are the respective offices and uses of the *à priori* and the *à posteriori* methods—the method of abstract science, and that of specific experiment—as well in Political Economy, as in all the other branches of social philosophy. Truth compels us to express our conviction that whether among those who have written on these subjects, or among those for whose use they wrote, few can be pointed out who have allowed to each of these methods its just value, and systematically kept each to its proper objects and functions. One of the peculiarities of modern times, the separation of theory from practice—of the studies of the closet from the outward business of the world—has given a wrong bias to the ideas and feelings both of the student and of the man of business. Each undervalues that part of the materials of thought with which he is not familiar. The one despises all comprehensive views, the other neglects details. The one draws his notion of the universe from the few objects with which his course of life has happened to render him familiar; the other having got demonstration on his side, and forgetting that it is only a demonstration *nisi*—a proof at all times liable to be set aside by the addition of a single new fact to the hypothesis—denies, instead of examining and sifting, the allegations which are opposed to him. For this he has considerable excuse in the worthlessness of the testimony on which the facts brought forward to invalidate the conclusions of theory usually rest. In these complex matters, men see with their preconceived opinions, not with their eyes: an interested or a passionate man's words, seldom look far forwards: their notions of human affairs, and of human nature itself, are circumscribed within the conditions of their own country and their own times. But the uses of history, and the spirit in which it ought to be studied, are subjects which have never yet had justice done them, and which involve considerations more multifarious than can be pertinently introduced in this place."—ED.

statistics are of little worth; and a year seldom passes without examples of the astounding falsehoods which large bodies of respectable men will back each other in publishing to the world as facts within their personal knowledge. It is not because a thing is *asserted* to be true, but because in its nature it *may* be true, that a sincere and patient inquirer will feel himself called upon to investigate it. He will use the assertions of opponents not as evidence, but indications leading to evidence; suggestions of the most proper course for his own inquiries.

But while the philosopher and the practical man bandy half-truths with one another, we may seek far without finding one who, placed on a higher eminence of thought, comprehends as a whole what they see only in separate parts; who can make the anticipations of the philosopher guide the observation of the practical man, and the specific experience of the practical man warn the philosopher where something is to be added to his theory.

The most memorable example in modern times of a man who united the spirit of philosophy with the pursuits of active life, and kept wholly clear from the partialities and prejudices both of the student and of the practical statesman, was Turgot; the wonder not only of his age, but of history, for his astonishing combination of the most opposite, and, judging from common experience, almost incompatible excellences.

Though it is impossible to furnish any test by which a speculative thinker, either in Political Economy or in any other branch of social philosophy, may know that he is competent to judge of the application of his principles to the existing condition of his own or any other country, indications may be suggested by the absence of which he may well and surely know that he is not competent. His knowledge must at least enable him to explain and account for what *is*, or he is an insufficient judge of what ought to

be. If a political economist, for instance, finds himself puzzled by any recent or present commercial phenomena; if there is any mystery to him in the late or present state of the productive industry of the country, which his knowledge of principle does not enable him to unriddle; he may be sure that something is wanting to render his system of opinions a safe guide in existing circumstances. Either some of the facts which influence the situation of the country and the course of events are not known to him; or, knowing them, he knows not what ought to be their effects. In the latter case his system is imperfect even as an abstract system; it does not enable him to trace correctly all the consequences even of assumed premises. Though he succeed in throwing doubts upon the reality of some of the phenomena which he is required to explain, his task is not yet completed; even then he is called upon to show how the belief, which he deems unfounded, arose; and what is the real nature of the appearances which gave a colour of probability to allegations which examination proves to be untrue.

When the speculative politician has gone through this labour—has gone through it conscientiously, not with the desire of finding his system complete, but of making it so—he may deem himself qualified to apply his principles to the guidance of practice: but he must still continue to exercise the same discipline upon every new combination of facts as it arises; he must make a large allowance for the disturbing influence of unforeseen causes, and must carefully watch the result of every experiment, in order that any residuum of facts which his principles did not lead him to expect, and do not enable him to explain, may become the subject of a fresh analysis, and furnish the occasion for a consequent enlargement or correction of his general views.

The method of the practical philosopher consists, there-

fore, of two processes; the one analytical, the other synthetical. He must *analyze* the existing state of society into its elements, not dropping and losing any of them by the way. After referring to the experience of individual man to learn the *law* of each of these elements, that is, to learn what are its natural effects, and how much of the effect follows from so much of the cause when not counteracted by any other cause, there remains an operation of *synthesis*; to put all these effects together, and, from what they are separately, to collect what would be the effect of all the causes acting at once. If these various operations could be correctly performed, the result would be prophecy; but, as they can be performed only with a certain approximation to correctness, mankind can never predict with absolute certainty, but only with a less or greater degree of probability; according as they are better or worse apprised what the causes are,—have learnt with more or less accuracy from experience the law to which each of those causes, when acting separately, conforms,—and have summed up the aggregate effect more or less carefully.

With all the precautions which have been indicated there will still be some danger of falling into partial views; but we shall at least have taken the best securities against it. All that we can do more, is to endeavour to be impartial critics of our own theories, and to free ourselves, as far as we are able, from that reluctance from which few inquirers are altogether exempt, to admit the reality or relevancy of any facts which they have not previously either taken into, or left a place open for in, their systems.

If indeed every phenomenon was generally the effect of no more than one cause, a knowledge of the law of that cause would, unless there was a logical error in our reasoning, enable us confidently to predict all the circumstances of the phenomenon. We might then, if we had carefully examined our premises and our reasoning, and found no

flaw, venture to disbelieve the testimony which might be brought to show that matters had turned out differently from what we should have predicted. If the causes of erroneous conclusions were always patent on the face of the reasonings which lead to them, the human understanding would be a far more trustworthy instrument than it is. But the narrowest examination of the process itself will help us little towards discovering that we have omitted part of the premises which we ought to have taken into our reasoning. Effects are commonly determined by a *concurrence* of causes. If we have overlooked any one cause, we may reason justly from all the others, and only be the further wrong. Our premises will be true, and our reasoning correct, and yet the result of no value in the particular case. There is, therefore, almost always room for a modest doubt as to our practical conclusions. Against false premises and unsound reasoning, a good mental discipline may effectually secure us; but against the danger of *overlooking* something, neither strength of understanding nor intellectual cultivation can be more than a very imperfect protection. A person may be warranted in feeling confident, that whatever he has carefully contemplated with his mind's eye he has seen correctly; but no one can be sure that there is not something in existence which he has not seen at all. He can do no more than satisfy himself that he has seen all that is visible to any other persons who have concerned themselves with the subject. For this purpose he must endeavour to place himself at their point of view, and strive earnestly to see the object as they see it; nor give up the attempt until he has either added the appearance which is floating before them to his own stock of realities, or made out clearly that it is an optical deception.

The principles which we have now stated are by no

means alien to common apprehension: they are not absolutely hidden, perhaps, from anyone, but are commonly seen through a mist. We might have presented the latter part of them in a phraseology in which they would have seemed the most familiar of truisms: we might have cautioned inquirers against too extensive *generalization*, and reminded them that there are *exceptions* to all rules. Such is the current language of those who distrust comprehensive thinking, without having any clear notion why or where it ought to be distrusted. We have avoided the use of these expressions purposely, because we deem them superficial and inaccurate. The error, when there is error, does *not* arise from generalizing too extensively; that is, from including too wide a range of particular cases in a single proposition. Doubtless, a man often asserts of an entire class what is only true of a part of it; but his error generally consists not in making too wide an assertion, but in making the wrong *kind* of assertion: he predicated an actual result, when he should only have predicated a *tendency* to that result—a power acting with a certain intensity in that direction. With regard to *exceptions*; in any tolerably advanced science there is properly no such thing as an exception. What is thought to be an exception to a principle is always some other and distinct principle cutting into the former: some other force which impinges against the first force, and deflects it from its direction. There are not a *law* and an *exception* to that law—the law acting in ninety-nine cases, and the exception in one. There are two laws, each possibly acting in the whole hundred cases, and bringing about a common effect by their conjunct operation. If the force which, being the less conspicuous of the two, is called the disturbing force, prevails sufficiently over the other force in some one case, to constitute that case what is commonly called an exception, the same disturbing force probably acts as a

modifying cause in many other cases which no one will call exceptions.

Thus if it were stated to be a law of nature, that all heavy bodies fall to the ground, it would probably be said that the resistance of the atmosphere, which prevents a balloon from falling, constitutes the balloon an exception to that pretended law of nature. But the real law is, that all heavy bodies *tend* to fall; and to this there is no exception, not even the sun and moon; for even they, as every astronomer knows, tend towards the earth, with a force exactly equal to that with which the earth tends towards them. The resistance of the atmosphere might, in the particular case of the balloon, from a misapprehension of what the law of gravitation is, be said to *prevail* over the law; but its disturbing effect is quite as real in every other case, since though it does not prevent, it retards the fall of all bodies whatever. The rule, and the so-called exception, do not divide the cases between them; each of them is a comprehensive rule extending to all cases. To call one of these concurrent principles an exception to the other, is superficial, and contrary to the correct principles of nomenclature and arrangement. An effect of precisely the same kind, and arising from the same cause, ought not to be placed in two different categories, merely as there does or does not exist another cause preponderating over it.

It is only in art, as distinguished from science, that we can with propriety speak of exceptions. Art, the immediate end of which is practice, has nothing to do with causes, except as the means of bringing about effects. However heterogeneous the causes, it carries the effects of them all into one single reckoning, and according as the sum-total is *plus* or *minus*, according as it falls above or below a certain line, Art says, Do this, or Abstain from doing it. The exception does not run by insensible

degrees into the rule, like what are called exceptions in science. In a question of practice it frequently happens that a certain thing is either fit to be done, or fit to be altogether abstained from, there being no medium. If, in the majority of cases, it is fit to be done, that is made the rule. When a case subsequently occurs in which the thing ought not to be done, an entirely new leaf is turned over; the rule is now done with, and dismissed: a new train of ideas is introduced, between which and those involved in the rule there is a broad line of demarcation; as broad and *tranchant* as the difference between Ay and No. Very possibly, between the last case which comes within the rule and the first of the exception, there is only the difference of a shade: but that shade probably makes the whole interval between acting in one way and in a totally different one. We may, therefore, in talking of art, unobjectionably speak of the *rule* and the *exception*; meaning by the rule, the cases in which there exists a preponderance, however slight, of inducements for acting in a particular way; and by the exception, the cases in which the preponderance is on the contrary side.¹

¹ The original edition of this essay, in the "London and Westminster Review" for October, 1836, is signed "A," that letter standing for "Antiquus," as Mill himself tells us in a note to a later written essay (see p. 236).—ED.

CORPORATION AND CHURCH
PROPERTY.

[1833.]

NOTE.

The following Essay was first published in "The Jurist" for February, 1833. It was reprinted with some omissions (which in the following reproduction of the original text are indicated by brackets) in the "Dissertations and Discussions," 1859, under the title, "The Right and Wrong of State Interference with Corporate and Church Property."

CORPORATION AND CHURCH PROPERTY.

WE intend, in the present article, to enter somewhat minutely into the subject of Foundations and Endowments, and the rights and duties of the Legislature in respect to them: with the design, first, of showing that there is no moral hindrance or bar to the interference of the Legislature with endowments, though it should even extend to a total change in their purposes; and next, of inquiring, in what spirit, and with what reservations, it is incumbent on a virtuous Legislature to exercise this power. As questions of political ethics, and the philosophy of legislation in the abstract, these inquiries are not unworthy of the consideration of thinking minds [nor of a conspicuous place in the pages of a work like the present.¹] But to this country, and at this particular time, they are practical questions; not solely in that more elevated and philosophical sense, in which all questions of right and wrong are emphatically practical questions; but as being the peculiar questions [on which to postpone forming an opinion, would be to abdicate the rank of thinking beings, and consent to be driven by the mere force of circumstances] of the present hour. For no one [capable of

[¹ The article, in fact, was the first in the fourth volume of the "Jurist."—ED.]

looking a quarter of a session before him] can help seeing that one of the most pressing of the duties which Parliamentary Reform has devolved upon our public men, as that to which we, as public writers, are now about to address ourselves; namely, to decide what righteously *may*, and, supposing this determined, what *should*, be done with the property of the Church, and of the various Public Corporations.

It is a twofold problem; a question of expediency, and a question of morality: the former complex, and depending upon temporary circumstances; the latter simple, and unchangeable. We are to examine, not merely in what way a certain portion of property may be most usefully employed; that is a subsequent consideration: but, whether we can touch it at all without *spoliation*; whether the diversion of the estates of foundations from the present hands, and from the present purposes, would be disposing of what is justly our own, or *robbing* somebody else of what is his; violating property, endangering all rights, and infringing the first principles of the social union. For the enemies of the interference of the Legislature assert no less. And, if this were so, it would already be an act of immorality even to *discuss* the other question. It is no fit occupation for an honest man, to cast up the probable profits of an act of plunder. If a resumption of endowments belongs to a class of acts which, by universal agreement, ought to be abstained from, whatever may be their consequences; there is no more to be said.

[It is under this aspect, then, that we propose first to consider the subject of our interference with foundations. We leave it to others, or perhaps ourselves, at another time to discuss whether existing foundations required to be resumed. What must be first decided, and what we are now about to attempt to decide, is, whether the Legislature is at liberty to entertain the question.]

If the inquiry we have now undertaken were embarrassed with no other difficulties than are inherent in its own nature, it would not detain us long. Unfortunately it is inextricably entangled with the hopes and fears, the attachments and antipathies, of these excited times. All men are either friendly or hostile to the Church of England; all men wish either well or ill to our universities, and to our municipal corporations. But we know not why the being biassed by such predilections or aversions, should be more pardonable in a moralist or a legislator, than it would be in a judge. If the dispute were, whether the Duke of Wellington should be called upon to account for £100,000, it would be an infamous perversion of justice to moot the question of the Duke of Wellington's public services, and to decide the cause according as the judge approves, or not, of the war with Bonaparte, or Catholic emancipation. The true question would be, whether the money in the Duke's possession is his or no. We have our opinion, like other people, on the merits or demerits of the clergy, and other holders of endowments. We shall endeavour to forget that we have any. General principles of justice are not to be shaped to suit the form and dimensions of some particular case in which the judge happens to take an interest.

[Our assertion with respect to the Church of England, and the trustees of all other national foundations, is, that the funds which they are in charge of are not theirs, but the nation's, and that the nation may justly resume them. But we would rather a hundred times that the property should remain in the present hands, than that it should be taken otherwise than by a high and solemn act of duty. No use to which it would be possible to convert the endowments would do so much good, as an act of doubtful morality would do harm. The passions which prompt men to seize and take, are never let loose with impunity, and

never require to be more tightly curbed than when they are indulged. If there be anyone who, in supporting a general resumption of endowments, thinks of the convenience first, and of the justice only second, we have nothing in common with him. It is as much the bounden duty of a nation as of an individual, to exact from itself a survey of the moral bearings of an action, the more deliberate in proportion as it is itself a party concerned, and tempted to the proceeding by other motives than a sense of moral obligation.

If, in the observations we are about to make, we be found wanting in the performance of this duty ; if we seek to carry our point not through the conscience of the nation, but through any of the less worthy impulses—let us be disregarded and despised, and let every word we are about to write be as it were unwritten. But if we approach the subject with a deep sense of the heavy responsibility of an unjust decision, and seek support to our cause from no motives but those to which an honest man may worthily listen on a question of right and wrong ; then may the words which we shall utter in this spirit, obtain from readers imbued with the like, patient hearing and unprejudiced judgment.]

1. By a foundation or endowment, is to be understood, money or money's worth (most commonly land) assigned, in perpetuity or for some long period, for a public purpose : meaning by public, a purpose which, whatever it may *be*, is *not* the personal use and enjoyment of an assignable individual or assignable individuals.

The foundations which exist or have existed, in this or other countries, are exceedingly multifarious. There are schools, and hospitals, supported by assignments of land or money ; there are also almshouses, and other charitable institutions of a nature more or less analogous. The estates of monasteries belong to the class of endowments :

so do those of our universities; and the lands and tithes of all established churches. The estates of the Corporation of London, of the Fishmongers' and Mercers' Companies, etc., are also public foundations, and differ from the foregoing only in being local, not national. All these masses of property originally belonged to some individual or individuals, or to the State; and were, either by the rightful owner, or by some wrongful possessor, appropriated to the several purposes to which they now, really or in name, continue to be applied.

It may seem most natural to begin by considering whether the existence of endowments is desirable at all; if this be settled in the affirmative, to inquire on what conditions they should be suffered to be constituted; and, lastly, how the Legislature ought to deal with them after they are formed. But the problem, what is to be done with existing endowments, is paramount in present importance to the question of prospective legislation. It is preferable, therefore, even at the expense of an inversion of the logical order of our propositions, to consider, first, whether it is allowable for the State to change the appropriation of endowments, and, afterwards, what is the limit at which its interference should stop.

2. If endowments are permitted, it is implied as a necessary condition, that the State, for a time at least, shall not intermeddle with them. The property assigned must temporarily be sacred to the purposes to which it was destined by its owners. The founders of the London University would never have subscribed, nor would Mr. Drummond have established the Oxford Professorship of Political Economy, if they had thought that they were merely raising a sum of money to be placed at the disposal of Parliament, or of the ministry for the time being. Subject to the restrictions which we shall hereafter suggest, the control of the founder, over the disposition of the

property, should, in point of degree, be absolute. But to what extent should it reach in point of time? For how long should this unlimited power of the founder continue?

To this question the answer is so simple and obvious that we may venture to express a doubt whether it can ever have been missed by any unsophisticated and earnest inquirer. The sacredness of the founder's assignment should continue during his own life, and for such longer period as the foresight of a prudent man may be presumed to reach, and no further. We do not pretend to fix the exact term of years; perhaps there is no necessity for its being accurately fixed; but it evidently should not be a long one. For such a period, it conduces to the ends for which foundations ought to exist, and for which alone they can ever rationally have been intended, that they should remain undisturbed.

All beyond this is to make the dead, judges of the exigencies of the living; to erect, not merely the ends, but the means, not merely the speculative opinions, but the practical expedients, of a gone-by age, into an irrevocable law for the present. The wisdom of our ancestors is, we fear, a sorry wisdom, but this is not even following the wisdom of our ancestors; for our ancestors did not bind themselves never to alter what they had once established. Under the guise of fulfilling a bequest, this is making a dead man's intentions for a single day, a rule for subsequent centuries, when we know not whether he himself would have made it a rule, even for the morrow. [It is as if one who was an infant when his mother died, should dress himself all his life in a frock and petticoats, because his mother clothed him in them when he was a baby.]

There is no fact in history which posterity will find it more difficult to understand, than that the idea of perpetuity, and that of any of the contrivances of man, should

have been coupled together in any sane mind: that it has been believed, nay, clung to as Gospel truth, and has formed part of the creed of whole nations, that a signification of the will of a mere man, ages ago, could impose upon all mankind now and for ever an obligation of obeying him:—that, in the beginning of the nineteenth century, it was not permitted to question this doctrine without opprobrium: though for hundreds of years before, a solemn condemnation of this very absurdity had been written in the laws, and familiar to every judge by whom, during all that period, they had been administered.

During the last four hundred years or thereabouts, in England and Wales, the power of a landed proprietor to entail his land in favour of a particular line of his descendants has been narrowed to a very moderate term of years after his decease. During the same length of time, it has been laid down as a maxim of the common law, in the sweeping terms in which technical jurisprudence delights, that “the law abhors perpetuities.” It is now a considerable number of years since a London merchant having by testament directed that the bulk of his fortune should accumulate for two generations, and then devolve without restriction upon a person specified; this will, rare as such dispositions might be expected to be, excited so much disapprobation, that an Act of Parliament¹ was passed, expressly to enact that nothing of the same sort should be done in future.

Is it of consequence to the public by whom and how private property is inherited, which, whoever possess it, will in the main be spent in ministering to one person's individual wants and enjoyments—and is the use made of a like sum, specifically set apart for the benefit of the public, or of an indefinite portion of the public, a matter in which

¹ The Thellusson Act, 39 and 40 Geo. III., c. 98.—ED.

the nation has no concern? Or shall we say it is supposed by King, Lords, and Commons, and the Judges of the land, that a man cannot know what partition of his property among his descendants, thirty years hence, will be for the interest of the descendants themselves; but that he may know (though he have scarcely learnt his alphabet) how children may be best educated five hundred years hence; how the necessities of the poor may then be best provided for; what branches of learning, or of what is called learning, it will be most important to cultivate, and by what body of men it will be desirable that the people should be taught religion, to the end of time?

Men would not yield up their understandings to doctrines like these, if they were not under some strong bias. Such thoughts never sprung from reason and reflection. [The affections have here usurped the judgment seat, and pronounced in place of the intellect.] The cry about robbing the Church, spoliation of endowments, etc., means only that the party likes better the purposes to which the monies are now applied, than those to which he thinks they would be applied if they were resumed:—a feeling which, if it be founded on conviction, we must be contemptible to blame; but were it even just, we do not see why a man, who has got at his conclusions by good arguments, should defend them by bad. It may be very unwise to alienate the property of some particular foundation; but that does not make it robbery. If it be inexpedient, try to prove it so; but do not pretend that it is a crime to disobey a man's injunctions who has been dead five hundred years. We fear, too, that this zeal for the inviolability of endowments proceeds often from a feeling, which we find it more difficult to bear with—that unreasoning instinct, which renders those whose souls are buried in their acres, or pent up in their money bags, partizans of the *uti possidetis* principle in all things; the dread that if any thing is taken from any

body, every thing will be taken from every body; a terror, the more passionate because it is vague, at seeing violent hands laid upon their Dagon *money*, though it be but to rescue him from the hands of those who have filched him away.

That this is the real source of much of the horror which is felt at a bare proposal that the Legislature should lay a finger upon the estates of a public trust, although it be to restore them to their original purposes, is manifest from this; that the same persons can witness the most absolute perversion and alienation of the endowment from its destined ends, by the slow, silent creeping-in of abuse in the hands of the trustees themselves, and not feel the slightest discomposure. Wherefore?—their solicitude was not for the objects of the endowment, but for the safety and sacredness of “vested rights.” They dislike the example of searching in a person’s pocket, although it be for stolen goods. For them, it is enough if the nine points of the law maintain their wonted sanctity. Those they are sure they have on their side, if any troublesome questioner should come and, in their turn, incommode *them*. The tenth point is much more intricate and obscure, and they have not half so much faith in it.

To every argument tending to prove the *utility* of the Church Establishment, or any other endowed public institution, we shall at all times lend an open ear. Like all reasons which are brought to show the inexpediency of a proposed innovation, they cannot be too carefully weighed. But when it is called spoliation of property, for the State to alter a disposition made by the State itself, or by an individual who died six hundred years ago, we answer, that no person ought to be exercising rights of property six hundred years after his death; that such rights of property, if they have been unwisely sanctioned by the State, ought to be instantaneously put an end to; that there is no fear of robbing a dead man; and no

reasonable dead man who gave his money when living, for the benefit of the community, would have desired that *his* mode of benefiting the community should be stuck to when a better could be found.

3. Thus far of the imaginary rights of the founder. Next, as to those rights of another kind, which, in the case of an existing endowment, have usually sprung up in consequence of its existence; we mean the life interest of the actual holders. How far are these analogous to what are deemed rights of property?—that is, rights which it is unjust to take from a man without his consent, or without giving him a full equivalent.

There are some endowments in which the life interests amount to rights of property in the strictest sense. These are such as are created for the application of their revenues to the mere use and enjoyment of individuals of a particular description: to give pensions to indigent persons, or to persons devoted to particular pursuits; to relieve the necessities, or reward the services, of persons of a particular kind, by supporting them in almshouses or hospitals.

There are probably very few of these endowments which are fit to continue: mankind have begun to find out that the mass of poverty is increased, not diminished, by these impotent attempts to keep pace with it by mere *giving*. All, however, who are now actually benefiting by such institutions, have a right to the continuance of the benefit, which should be as inviolable as the right of the weaver to the produce of his loom. They have it by gift; precisely as if the founder was alive, and had settled it upon them by deed under hand and seal. To take it from an existing incumbent would be an *ex-post-facto* law of the worst kind. It would be the same sort of injustice as if, in abolishing entails, the *existing* landed proprietors had all been ejected from their estates, on the plea that the estates had *come* to them by entail from their predecessors.

These rights, however, are never any thing but life interests. Such pensions or alms are not hereditary. They are not transmissible by will, or by gift. There is no assignable person standing in remainder or reversion; no individual specially designated, either by law or custom, to succeed to a vacancy as it arises. No person would suffer any privation, or be disappointed in any authorized expectation, by the resumption of the endowment at the death of the existing incumbents. There is no loss, where nobody will ever know who has lost. To say that the funds cannot rightfully be resumed at the expiration of the life interests, because somebody or other would succeed to them if they continued to exist, is tantamount to affirming, that the army or navy can never be reduced without an act of spoliation, because, if they were kept up, somebody, to be sure, would be made a cadet or a midshipman, who now will not.¹

But there is another and a far more important class of endowments, where the object is not a provision for individuals of whatsoever description, but the furtherance of some public purpose; the diffusion of religious instruction, for example, or the education of youth. Such, for instance, is the nature of the Church property, and the property attached to the Universities and the foundation schools. The individuals through whose hands the money passes, never entered into the founder's contemplation otherwise than as mere trustees for the public purpose.

¹ Charities or liberalities of this kind are not always unconditional; they may be burthened with the performance of some duty. Still, if the duty be merely an incidental charge, and the main purpose of the endowment be a provision for the individuals, the Legislature, though it may release the incumbents from the performance of the duty, is not at liberty, on that pretext, to make them forfeit the right. This they ought to retain for their lives, or for the term of years for which it was conferred; provided they hold themselves in readiness to fulfil its conditions, so far as they lawfully may.

The founder of a College at Oxford did not bestow his money in order that some men then living, and an indefinite series of successors appointing one another in a direct line, might be comfortably fed and clothed. He, we may be sure, intended no benefit to them, further than as a necessary means to the end he had in view—the education of youth, and the advancement of learning. The like is true of the Church property: it is held in trust, for the spiritual culture of the people of England. The Clergy and the Universities are not proprietors, nor even partly trustees and partly proprietors: they are called so, we know, in law, for convenience of classification; but it is a classification which only tends to mislead. The trustees are indeed, at present, owing to the supineness of the Legislature, the sole tribunal empowered to judge of the performance of the trust: but it will scarcely be pretended that the money is made over to them for any other reason than because they are charged with the trust,—or that it is not an implied condition, that they shall apply every shilling of it with an exclusive regard to the performance of the duty intrusted to the collective body.

Yet of persons thus situated, persons whose interest in the foundation is entirely subsidiary and subordinate, the whole of whose rights exist solely as the necessary means to enable them to perform certain duties—it is currently asserted, and that not modestly, and in a tone of discussion, but angrily, abusively, and in the spirit of arrogant assumption, that the endowments of the Church and of the Universities are *THEIR property*; to deprive them of which would be as much an act of confiscation as to rob a land-owner of his estate!

Their property! In what system of legislative ethics, or even of positive law,¹ is an estate in the hands of trustees

¹ If any caviller should say (and he must be a caviller who would say) that the English common law is an exception, inas-

the property of the trustees? It is the property of the *cestui que trust*: of the person, or body of persons, for whose benefit the trust is created. This, in the case of a national endowment, is the entire people.¹

4. The claims of the Clergy, and of the various members of the Universities; to the retention of their present incomes, are of a widely different nature from those rights which are intended when we speak of the inviolability of property; and stand upon a totally different foundation. The same person who is a trustee is also a labourer. He is to be paid for his services. What he is entitled to, is his wages while his services are required, and such retiring allowance as is stipulated in his engagement. All his just pretensions depend on the terms of his contract. Though there might be inhumanity, there would be no injustice, in turning him out into the streets when his services are no longer needed, unless the contract by which he was engaged had expressly or tacitly provided otherwise.

much as trusts are not recognized or enforced by the common law Courts, the legal estate vesting in the trustee; we answer that we cannot consider any thing as law which does not actually obtain as such, but is superseded by the contrary mandates of the rival power Equity.

¹ In the case of endowments which, though existing for public purposes, are not national but local, such as the estates of the City of London, the *cestui que trust* is not the entire people, but some limited portion of them, namely, those who are directly reached by the benefit intended to be conferred. To apply such property to *national* purposes, without the consent, duly signified, of the fractional part of the nation which is interested in it, might be wrong. But that fractional portion is generally far larger than the body which the law now recognizes as the proprietor. We are ready to maintain, for example, that if the Legislature (as it ought) should unite the whole of the metropolis into one body for municipal purposes, the estates of the City of London, and of all the incorporated trades, might be applied to the benefit of that collective body without a particle of injustice.

It is, however, a fact, that in the majority of cases, and particularly in the case of the Church and of the Universities, the incumbents hold their emoluments under an implied contract, which fully entitles them to retain the whole amount during the term of their lives.

If the army were to be remodelled, or to be reduced, and the whole of the officers changed, or a part of them discarded; and if these were thrown upon the world, without allowing them half-pay, or the pension of their rank, there would not (we think it will be allowed) be any spoliation of property. But it might be said, with perfect justice, that there would be a breach of an implied contract; because the State would be defeating an expectation raised by its own uniform practice. Half-pay, or a pension, is certainly not *promised* to an officer when he enters the army; he does not give his services on that express *condition*. But the regulations of the army have from time immemorial sanctioned the practice, and led the officers to count upon it, and they give their services on that *understanding*.

The case of the clergyman only differs from that of the military officer in this, that the one, by custom, may be deprived of his place, but retains a part of its emoluments; the other, by a different custom, retains his place, emoluments and all, to the very end of his days. If this were the practice in the army, then instead of half-pay an officer would never retire on less than full; and all persons would see that, whether this was a good practice or no, it ought not to be abolished retrospectively. The same argument holds good in the case of the clergyman.

It cannot be doubted that where the emoluments of a public officer have, by the uniform practice of ages, been considered as placed out of the control of the Legislature, the Legislature exercises that control to the disadvantage of the individual, without giving him notice before he accepts the

office, is an injustice to him. It gives him reasonable ground for complaining of a breach of contract, and should be scrupulously avoided; even if it were not something more than merely impolitic, to immolate large classes of men for the pecuniary gain of the remainder; and most unwise to teach a multitude of influential persons that their only means of maintaining themselves and their families in their accustomed comfort is by opposing a successful resistance to political reforms.

In return for the continuation of the life interests after releasing the incumbents from the performance of accompanying duties, the State, of course, would acquire a right to the services of the individuals in any other mode in which it could turn them to useful account; provided it were one suited to the station they had formerly filled.

5. We have endeavoured to make as clear as possible the real grounds of the moral question respecting the interference of the Legislature with foundations. We have shown that it is no violation of any right which ought to exist in the founder, to set aside his dispositions many years after his decease; but that where individuals have been allowed to acquire beneficial interests in the endowment, these ought in general to be respected; being, in most cases, either rights of property for life, or rights for life by virtue of an implied contract. But, with the reservation of these life interests, the Legislature is at liberty to dispose, at its discretion, of the endowment, after that moderate number of years has elapsed from the date of its formation, beyond which the foresight of an individual cannot reasonably be supposed to extend.

We feel certain that the conclusion which we have just stated is fully made out, and that nothing in the nature of an argument, capable of bearing examination, can be brought to invalidate it. But it is harder, in some cases,

to convince men's imagination than their reason; and we are not sure that we have said enough to destroy the force of an objection, which is yet a mere illusion of the imagination, by the aid of a collective name.

Would you rob the Church? it is asked. And at the sound of these words rise up images of rapine, violence, plunder, and every sentiment of abhorrence which would be excited by a proposal to take away from an individual the earnings of his toil or the inheritance of his fathers.

But the Church! Who is the Church? Who is it that we desire to rob? Who are the persons whose property, whose rights, we are proposing to take away?

Not the clergy; from them we do not propose to take anything. To every man who now benefits by the endowment, we have said that we would leave his entire income; at least until the State shall offer, as the purchase-money of his services in some other shape, advantages which he himself shall regard as equivalent.

But if not the clergy, surely we are not proposing to rob the laity: on the contrary, they are robbed now, if the fact be, that the application of the money to its present purpose is no longer advisable. We are exhorting the laity to *claim* their property out of the hands of the clergy; who are not the Church, but only the managing members of the association.

Qui trompe-t-on ici? asks Figaro. *Qui vole-t-on ici?* may well be asked. Who suffers by the robbery when everybody robs nobody? [Show us the man, woman, or child who is to be robbed, and he shall be forthwith unrobbed; we will warrant him harmless at our own risk.] But though no man, no woman, and no child is robbed, the Church it seems is robbed. What follows? That the Church may be robbed, and no man, woman, or child be the worse for it. If this be so, why, in Heaven's name,

should it not be done? If any hard cash can be squeezed out of an abstraction, we are for appropriating it at once. We had no idea that the region

“Where entity and quiddity,
The ghosts of defunct bodies, fly,”

was an Eldorado of riches. We wish all other abstract ideas had as ample a patrimony. It is fortunate that their estates are of a less volatile and airy nature than themselves, and that here at length is a “*chimæra bombinans in vacuo*” which lives upon something more substantial than “*secundas intentiones*.” We hold all such *entia rationis* to be fair game, and their possessions a legitimate subject of invasion and conquest.

Any act may be a crime, if calling names could make it so; but the robbery that we object to must be something more than robbing a word. The laws of property were made for the protection of men, and not of phrases. As long as the bread is not taken from any of our fellow creatures, we care not though the whole English dictionary had to beg in the streets. Let those who think it a robbery for the nation to resume what we say is its own, tell us whose it is; let them inform us, what human creatures it belongs to; not what letters and syllables. The alphabet has no property, and if it brings an action for damages in any court where we are judge, it shall be non-suited.

But the Church, it will be said, is a corporation; and a corporation is a *person*, and may hold property, and bring an action at law. A corporation never dies, but is like a river, ever flowing, yet always the same; while it empties at one extremity it fills at the other, and preserves its identity by the continuity of its existence. Whatever is acquired for the corporation belongs to the corporation, even when all its members have died out, and been

succeeded by others. So London stands upon the Thames as it did at the Conquest, though not one drop of water be the same.

It is quite unnecessary to remind us of all this. It is true that such is the law. We admit that the law can call a man now living, and a man not yet born, the same person; but that does not hinder them from being two different men. After declaring them one person, it may ordain that the income held by one in a certain capacity, shall pass, on his death, to the other. There is nothing at all inconceivable in the idea; so far from it, that such is actually the fact. It is as simple and as easy as to say that a man's income shall pass to the man's own son. It is one of the modes in which property may be legally transmitted. It is part of the law of inheritance and succession.

There is not the slightest intention entertained of disputing all this. The law is precisely as it is said to be: but because the law is so, does it follow that it ought to be? or that it must remain protected against amendment, more than any other of the laws which regulate the succession to property?

All, or almost all, laws give rights to somebody. By the abrogation of any, or almost any laws, some rights would cease to exist. But because a law has once been enacted, ought it to subsist to the end of all things? We know that there are some alterations in the law, which would be, morally speaking, infringements of property. What makes them so? Not, surely, the mere fact, inseparable from the repeal of any law whatever, that the rights which it created cease to exist. Where then lies the distinction? There is no difficulty about it, nor ever was. The difference is, that some laws cannot be altered without painfully frustrating existing and authorized expectations; for which, therefore, compensation is, in all or most cases, due. Now

in the case of church property no authorized expectations are defeated, except those of existing incumbents: this evil is prevented if the life interests of the incumbents are preserved to them.¹ To make the semblance of an injury where there is none, nothing better can be thought of than to lump up the living incumbents and their unborn successors into one undivided mass, call the entire heap one person, and pretend that not to give to the unborn man, is to take from the living one.

[Our argument, it is true, professes only to hold good in morality; we do not affect to believe that it would hold good in law. What we propose would be contrary to law. Repealing a law is generally contrary to law.] To resume endowments would incontestably be to set aside, by an act of the legislature, a disposition of property lawfully made. It would be a change in the laws; but a change which is allowable, if to alter a disposition of law be ever allowable. The fact of its being a disposition of property can make no difference. Property surely may be appropriated by law, to purposes from which it may be highly desirable that it should be alienated. Much property is set apart by the laws of all idolatrous nations, for the special use and service of their gods. Large revenues are annually expended in offerings to those gods. To resume those revenues would manifestly be robbing Baal; they are his by law; law cannot give a clearer right of property than he has to them. A lawyer, addressing a court of justice, would have nothing to object to this argument: but a moralist or a legislator might say, that the revenues were of no use to Baal, and that he would never miss them.

¹ On reprinting this essay Mill suggested that we might read "persons actually in orders" here, instead of "existing incumbents;" and added that expectations of unbeneficed clergymen might be satisfied by postponing the resumption of the endowment to allow the expectation to become possession.—ED.

We, of this generation, are not addicted to falling down before a Baal of brass or stone: the idols we worship are abstract terms; the divinities to whom we render up our substance are personifications. Besides our duties to our fellow-countrymen, we owe duties to the *constitution*; privileges which landlords or merchants have no claim to, must be granted to *agriculture*, or *trade*: and when every clergyman has received the last halfpenny of his dues and expectations, there are rights of *the Church*, which it would be sacrilege to violate.

For all such rights we confess our utter indifference. The only moral duties which we are conscious of, are towards living beings, either present or to come; who can be in some way better for what we do or forbear. When we have done our duty to all these, we feel easy in our minds, and sleep with an untroubled conscience the sleep of the just; a sleep which the groans of no plundered abstraction are loud enough to disturb.

6. If our case were not already far more than sufficiently made out, it would be pertinent to observe that the Church of England, least of all religious establishments, is entitled to dispute the power of the legislature to alter the destination of endowments, since it owes to the exercise of such a power all its own possessions.

The Roman Catholic Church derived its property from an earlier source than any of the existing governments of Christendom: it is moreover a society within itself, which existed anterior to the State, which is organized independently of the State, and no changes in the State can affect its identity, or its constitution. Its endowments, too, or a great part of them, came into its hands not for public purposes but for private; not in trust, but by fair bargain and sale; the donor taking out the value in masses for his private salvation; and thereby effecting an earlier liberation of his individual soul from purgatory. If any ecclesi-

astical establishment, therefore, could be entitled to deem itself ill-used in having its property taken away from it, this might. Not so the Church of England; she, from her origin, never was anything but a state church; all the property she ever had, the State first took from the Roman Catholic Church; exercising therein a just and proper attribute of sovereignty; but perpetrating a flagrant wrong in paying little or no regard to life interests, and consigning the incumbents to penury. The corporation which was then turned out of house and home, still exists, and is in every respect the same as before: but if the Church of England were separated from the State, its identity as a corporation would be gone: the present religious society would be dissolved, and a new one formed, under different rules and a different principle of government; from a monarchy it would be changed to a republic, from a system of nomination to one of popular election. A Catholic bishop can look out upon the fair and broad domains of his Protestant substitute, and say, all this would have been mine. But let the State endowments be once withdrawn from the Church of England, her mitred but unpalaced prelates will indulge in no such delusion: nobody, we suppose, will then stand up for the unscriptural¹ and simoniacal abuses of lay-patronage and *congés d'élire*; and the divine who for his piety and learning shall have been elected rector of Stanhope, or bishop of Winchester, if he ever cast a wistful thought towards the pristine appendages of his dignity, will check it by the reflection, that they would not have belonged to *him*, but to some political tool, some tutor or chaplain of a minister, or some stupid younger son of a squirearchal house. A Catholic prelate, no doubt, believes at heart that he has been robbed; as the descendants of the Pretender would have

¹ In 1859 Mr. Mill withdrew the word "unscriptural."—ED.

believed to the latest generation, that they ought to be Kings of England. But an English Protestant bishop who (after his church in ceasing to receive state pay, had ceased also to be fashioned as a state tool) should still fancy that *he* was the party losing by the cutting off of the salary, must be strangely ignorant of the history of England's political religion, as well as of something else which would have taught him that a person honestly selected to serve God, was not a likely individual to have been appointed high-priest of Mammon.

7. We have now arrived at the commencement of the second, and only remaining part of our task. We have contended that endowments, after a certain lapse of time, may, at the discretion of the legislature, be diverted from their original purposes. It remains to consider by what principles or rules the legislature is bound to govern itself in the exercise of this discretion.

We would prescribe but one rule: it is somewhat general, but sufficient to indicate the spirit in which the control of the legislature ought to be exerted. It is this. When a resolution has been taken (which should never be, except on strong grounds) to alter the appropriation of an endowment; let the first object be to employ it usefully; the second, to depart as little from the original purpose of the foundation, as is consistent with that primary object. The endeavour should be, even in altering the dispositions of the founder, still to carry into effect as much of his intention as it is possible to realize without any sacrifice of substantial utility.

This limitation of the discretionary power of interference residing in the legislature, would meet, we suspect, with as much resistance (though from a very different sort of persons) as the discretionary power itself. It would be objected to by some, because they are desirous to confiscate

the existing endowments towards paying off the national debt, or defraying the current expenses of the State: by others, because they deem foundations altogether to be rather mischievous than useful, and the intentions of founders to be undeserving of any regard. This last opinion is the more entitled to notice, as among its supporters is to be numbered the great and good Turgot. That eminently wise man thought so unfavourably of the purposes for which endowments are usually made, and of the average intelligence of the founders, that he was an enemy to foundations altogether.

Notwithstanding our deep reverence for this illustrious man, and the great weight which is due to his opinion on all subjects which he had maturely considered, we must regard his opinion on this subject, as one of what it is now allowable to call the prejudices of his age. The wisest man is not safe from the liability to mistake for good the reverse of some inveterate and grievous ill. The clearer his discernment of existing evils, and the more absolutely his whole soul is engaged in the contest against them, the more danger that the mischiefs which chiefly occupy his own thoughts, should render him insensible to their contraries, and that in guarding one side he should leave the other uncovered. If Turgot did not wholly escape this error, which was common to all the philosophers of his time, ample allowances may be justly claimed both for him and for them. It is not the least of the mischiefs of our mischievous prejudices, that in their decline they raise up counter-prejudices, and that the human mind must oscillate for a time between opposite extremes, before it can settle quietly in the middle. The prejudices of the French philosophers were such as it was natural should exist, when all established institutions were in the very last stage of decay and decrepitude, preparatory to the catastrophe by which, soon after, they were swept away:—when whatever

was meant to transmit light, had become a curtain to keep it out, and whatever was designed for the protection of society, had turned to preying upon society; when every trust which had been reposed in individuals for the benefit of the species, had degenerated into a selfish job, and the canker had eaten so deeply into the heart of civilization, that the greatest genius of his time deliberately preferred the condition of a naked savage.

The principal foundation which existed in the time of Turgot was the Catholic hierarchy; when, if it had lost some part of its capacity of evil, it could less than ever pretend to contain any spark of good; when it had become irreconcilably hostile to the progress of the human mind, because that progress was no longer compatible with belief in its tenets; and when, to stand its ground against the advance of incredulity, it had been driven to knit itself closely with that temporal despotism, to which it had once been a substantial, and the only existing, impediment and control. After this came monastic bodies constituted ostensibly for purposes which derived all their value from superstition, and now not even fulfilling what they professed; bodies, of most of which the very existence had become one vast and continued lie. Next came universities and academical institutions, which had once taught all that was then known; but having ever since indulged their ease by remaining stationary, found it for their interest that knowledge should do so too—institutions for education, which always kept a century behind the community they affected to educate; who, when Descartes appeared, publicly censured him for differing from Aristotle; and when Newton appeared, anathematized him for differing from Descartes. Then there were hospitals which killed more of their unhappy patients than they cured, and charities, of which the superintendents, like the licentiates in *Gil Blas*, got rich by taking care of the affairs of the poor: or which at best

made twenty beggars, by giving, or pretending to give, a miserable and dependent pittance to one.

The foundations, therefore, were among the grossest and most conspicuous of the familiar abuses of the time ; and beneath their shade flourished and multiplied large classes of men, by interest and habit the protectors of all abuses whatsoever. What wonder, that a life spent in practical struggles against abuses should have strongly prepossessed Turgot against foundations in general. Yet the evils existed, not because there were foundations, but because those foundations were perpetuities, and provision was not made for their continual modification, to meet the wants of each successive age.

The opinion of Turgot was sufficiently in accordance with the prevailing philosophy of his time. It is rare that the same heads and the same hands excel both in pulling down and in building up. The work of urgency in those days was to make war against evil : this the philosophers did, and the negation of evil was nearly all the good which their philosophy provided for. They seem to have conceived the perfection of political society to be reached, if man could but be compelled to abstain from injuring man ; not considering that men need help as well as forbearance, and that Nature is to the greater number a severer taskmaster even than man is to man. They left each individual to fight his own battle against fate and necessity, with little aid from his fellow-men, save what he, of his own spontaneous seeking, might purchase in open market and pay for.

If this be a just estimate of the exigencies of human society ; if man requires nothing from man, except not to be molested by him, nor from government, except to be guarded against molestation ; undoubtedly foundations, and many other things, are great absurdities. But we may conceive a people, perfectly exempt from oppression by their government, amply protected by that government,

both against foreign enemies and against force or fraud as between its own citizens ; we may conceive all this secured, as far at least as institutions can secure it, and yet the people in an abject state of degradation, both physical and mental. [We should not despair of proving, that only in certain transitional periods of history is the government itself the cause of much evil, or would a change in the government produce much good : at all other times whatever evils exist in the government, are but the too faithful picture of the evils existing in the national mind ; of little importance compared with these last, and incurable except in proportion as these are cured.]

The primary and perennial sources of all social evil, are ignorance and want of culture. These are not reached by the best contrived system of political checks, necessary as such checks are for other purposes. There is also an unfortunate peculiarity attending these evils. While they are so much the greatest of all calamities, they are those of which the persons suffering from them are apt to be the least aware. Of their bodily wants and ailments mankind are generally conscious ; but the want of the mind, the want of being wiser and better, is in the far greater number of cases unfelt : misery indeed is felt, but is ascribed to any imaginable cause except the true one. This want has moreover the property of disguising from mankind not only itself, but the most eligible means of providing even for the wants of which they are conscious.

On what, then, have mankind depended, on what must they continue to be dependent, for the removal of their ignorance and their defect of culture ? Mainly, on the unremitting exertions of the more instructed and cultivated, whether in the position of the government or in a private station, to awaken in their minds a consciousness of this want, and to facilitate to them the means of supplying it. The instruments of this work are not merely schools and

colleges, but every means by which the people can be reached, either through their intellects or their sensibilities : from preaching and popular writing, to national galleries, theatres, and public games.

Here, then, is a wide field of usefulness open for foundations ; and in point of fact, they have been destined for such purposes oftener than for any other. We are of opinion that such endowments are deserving of encouragement, where a sufficiency do not already exist ; and that they ought not to be appropriated in another manner, as long as any opening remains for their useful application in this.

A doctrine is indeed abroad, and has been sanctioned by many high authorities, beginning with Adam Smith, that endowed establishments, for education or other public purposes, are a mere premium upon idleness and inefficiency. Undoubtedly they are so, when it is nobody's business to see that the receivers of the endowment do their duty ; when (what is more) every attempt to regulate, or so much as to know (further than the interested parties chuse to make it known) the manner in which the funds are employed, and the nature and extent of the service rendered in consideration of them, is resented and exclaimed against as an atrocious interference with the inviolability of private property. That this is the condition of most of our own endowed establishments is too true. But instead of fixing our eyes exclusively upon what is nearest to us, let us turn them towards the endowed Universities of France and Germany, and mark if those are places of idleness and inefficiency. Let us see whether, where the endowment proceeds from the governments themselves, and where the governments do not, as here, leave it optional whether that which is promised and paid for shall or shall not be done, it be not found that, notwithstanding the acknowledged defects of those governments, the education given is the

very best which the age and country can supply. Let us even look at home, and examine whether, with all the grievous abuses of the endowed seminaries of Great Britain, they are, after all, a particle worse than, or even so bad as, almost all our other places of education. We may ask, whether the desire to gain as much money with as little labour as is consistent with saving appearances, be peculiar to the endowed teachers? Whether the plan of nineteenth-twentieths of our unendowed schools, be not an organized system of charlatanerie for imposing upon the ignorance of parents? Whether parents do, in point of fact, prove themselves as solicitous, and as well qualified, to judge rightly of the merits of places of education, as the theory of Adam Smith supposes? Whether the truth be not, that, for the most part, they bestow very little thought upon the matter; or if they do, show themselves in general the ready dupes of the very shallowest artifices? Whether the necessity of keeping parents in good humour does not too often, instead of rendering the education better, render it worse; the real ends of instruction being sacrificed, not solely (as would be the case under other circumstances) to the ease of the teacher, but to that, and *also* to the additional positive vices of clap-trap and lip-proficiency? We may ask whether it is not matter of experience, that a schoolmaster who endeavours really to educate, instead of endeavouring only to seem to educate, and laying himself out for the suffrages of those who never look below the surface, and only for an instant at that, is almost sure, unless he have the genius and the ardour of a Pestalozzi, to make a losing speculation? Let us do what we may, it will be the study of the merely trading schoolmaster to teach down to the level of the parents, be that level high or low; as it is of the trading author, to write down to the level of his readers. And in the one shape as in the other, it is in all times and in all places indispensable, that enlightened

individuals and enlightened governments should, from other motives than that of pecuniary gain, bestir themselves to provide (though by no means forcibly to impose) that good and wholesome food for the wants of the mind, for which the competition of the mere trading market affords in general so indifferent a substitute.

It may be said, however, that where there is a wise government, and one which has the perfect confidence of the people, whatever expense it may be requisite either to defray or to advance for national education, or any other of the purposes for which endowments exist, ought rather to be furnished by the government, and paid out of the taxes; the government being probably a better judge of good education than an average man—even an average founder.

To this we answer, that the full benefit of the superior wisdom of the government would be obtained, in the case of old foundations, by that discretionary power of modifying the dispositions of the founder, which as we have contended at so much length, ought to be exerted by the government as often as it sees cause. We certainly agree, that if the government is so wise, and if the people rely so implicitly on its wisdom, as to find money out of the taxes for all the purposes of utility to which they could have applied the endowment, it is of no consequence whether the endowment be alienated or no; the alienation is merely nominal. But all know how far the fact at present differs from the above supposition. We can scarcely look forward to a time when it will not be extremely difficult to raise any considerable fund by taxation for any new purpose. But if there were a fund specially set apart, which never came from the people's pockets at all, which was given to them in trust for purposes of education, and which it was considered improper to divert to any other employment while it could be usefully devoted to that; the people

would be willing enough to have it applied to that purpose if the government chose. There is such a fund, and it consists of the national endowments.

If, again, it be said, that as the people grow more enlightened, they will become more able to appreciate, and more willing to pay for, good instruction; that the competition of the market will become more and more adequate to provide good education, and endowed establishments will be less and less necessary; we admit the fact. And we, for our share, will let the State do what it likes with endowments, so soon as the legislature, being well constituted and composed of the *élite* of the nation, shall be of opinion that the generality of the private schools and colleges are equal to any which itself can provide.

So much with regard to old endowments; the application of which, to the purpose for which they were destined, ought to be as completely under the control of the government as if the funds were taken directly out of the taxes. But in addition to these old endowments, the liberty of forming new ones, for education and mental culture in all shapes, seems to us of considerable importance; and a limited number of years should, we think, be allowed, during which the disposition of the founder should undergo no alteration.

We deem this advisable, simply because governments are fallible; and, as they have ample means both of providing and of recommending the education they deem best, should not be allowed to prevent other people from doing the same. No government is entitled (further than is implied in the very act of governing) to make its own opinion the measure of every thing which is useful and true. A perfect government would, no doubt, be always under the guidance of the wisest members of the community. But no government can unite all the wisdom which is in all the members of the community taken

together; much less can a mere majority in a legislative body. And it must be a very conceited government which would shut the door in the teeth of all wisdom but its own. A nation ought not to place its entire stake upon the wisdom of one man, or one body of men, and to deprive all other intellect and virtue of a fair field of usefulness, unless they can be made to square exactly with the intellect and virtue of that man or body. It is the wisdom of a community, as well as of an individual, to beware of being one-sided: the more chances it gives itself, the greater the probability that some will succeed. A government, when properly constituted, should be allowed the greatest possible facilities for what itself deems good; but the smallest for preventing the good which may chance to come from elsewhere. This will not be disputed if the government be a monarchy or an aristocracy: it is quite equally true when the constitution is popular. The disapprobation of the government, in that case, means the disapprobation of the majority: and where the opinion of the majority gives the law, there, above all, it is eminently the interest of the majority that minorities should have fair play. Sinister interest indeed is often found in a minority, but so, it must also be remembered, is truth: at her original appearance she must be so. All improvements, either in opinion or practice, must be in a minority at first.

We deem it important that individuals should have it in their power to enable good schooling, good writing, good preaching, or any other course of good instruction, to be carried on for a certain number of years at a pecuniary loss. By that time, if the people are intelligent, and the government wisely constituted, the institution will probably be capable of supporting itself, or the government will be willing to adopt all that is good in it, for the improvement of the institutions which are under the public care. For, that the people can see what is for their

good, when it has long been shown them, is commonly true; that they can foresee it—seldom.

Endowments, again, are a natural and convenient mode of providing for the support of establishments which are interesting only to a peculiar class, and for which, therefore, it would be improper to tax all the members of the community. Such, for instance, are colleges for the professional instruction of the clergy of a sect; as Maynooth, York, or Highbury.

8. If, then, it be in truth desirable that foundations should exist, which we think is clear from the foregoing and many other considerations; it would seem to follow, as a natural consequence, that the appropriation made by the founder should not be set aside, save in so far as paramount reasons of utility require; that his design should be no further departed from than he himself would probably have approved, if he had lived to the present time, and participated to a reasonable degree in its best ideas. If foundations deserve to be encouraged, it is desirable to reward the liberality of the founder, by allowing to works of usefulness (though a perpetuity is impossible) as prolonged a duration of individual and distinguishable existence as circumstances will admit.

But this is not the only, nor perhaps the strongest reason, for keeping to a certain extent in view, even in an alienation of endowments, the intention of the founder. We conceive that almost any fixed rule, consistent with insuring the employment of the funds for *some* purpose of real utility, is preferable to allowing financiers to count upon them as a resource applicable to all the exigencies of the State indiscriminately: otherwise they may be seized on to supply, not the most permanent or essential, but the most immediate and important demands: one year of financial difficulty might suffice to dissipate funds that centuries would not replace; and the time for an inter-

ference with foundations would be determined, not by the necessity of a reform, but by the state of the quarter's revenue. A still more cogent consideration, is the immense importance to society of the associations which lead mankind to respect the declared will of every man, in the disposal of what is justly his own. That will is surely not least deserving of respect, when it is ordaining an act of beneficence. And any uncalled for deviation from it (if not, strictly speaking, a violation of property), runs counter to a feeling so nearly allied to those on which the respect for property is founded, that there is scarcely a possibility of infringing the one without shaking the security of the other.

It is no violation of these salutary associations to resume an endowment, if it be done with the conscientious reservation which we have suggested. Respect for the intentions of the founder is not shown by a literal adherence to his mere words, but by an honest attempt to give execution to his real wishes; not sticking superstitiously to the means which he hit upon accidentally, or because he knew no better; but regarding solely, as he himself did, the end which he sought to compass by those means.

The first duty of the legislature, then, is to employ the endowment *usefully*: and that in a *degree* corresponding to the greatness of the benefit contemplated by the donor. But it is also of importance, that not only as great a benefit, but as far as possible the same kind of benefit, should be reaped by society, as that which the founder intended. We are not to consider, to what object we, under the temptations of the moment, should like best to apply the money; but rather what, among all purposes of unquestionable utility, which a reasonable man in these days would value sufficiently to give this sum of money for, is the particular purpose most resembling the original disposition of the founder.

Thus, money assigned for purposes of education should

be devoted, by preference, to education: the kind, and the mode, being altered, as the principles and practice of education came to be better understood. Money left for giving alms should certainly cease to be expended in giving alms; but it should be applied, in preference to the general benefit of the poorer classes, in whatever manner might appear most eligible. The endowments of an established church should continue to bear that character, as long as it is deemed advisable that the clergy of a sect or sects should be supported by a public provision of that amount: and under any circumstances, as much of these endowments as is required should be sacredly preserved for the purposes of spiritual culture; using that expression in its primitive meaning, to denote the culture of the inward man—his moral and intellectual well-being, as distinguished from the mere supply of his bodily wants.

Such, indeed, as has been forcibly maintained by Mr. Coleridge,¹ was the only just conception of a national clergy, from their first establishment. To the minds of our ancestors they presented themselves, not solely as ministers for going through the ceremonial of religion, nor even solely as religious teachers in the narrow sense, but as the *lettered* class; the *clerici* or clerks: whose highest concern indeed was religion, as it was of all other men; but who were appointed generally to prosecute all those studies, and diffuse all those impressions, which constituted mental culture, as then understood; which fitted the mind of man for his condition, destiny, and duty, as a man. In proportion as this enlarged conception of the object of a national church establishment has been departed from, so far, in the opinion of the first living defender of our own establishment, it has been perverted both in idea and in fact from its true nature and ends. A

¹ See his little work on Church and State.

national *clerisy* or clergy, as Mr. Coleridge conceives it, would be a grand institution for the education of the whole people: not their school education merely, though that would be included in the scheme; but for training and rearing them, by systematic culture continued throughout life, to the highest perfection of their mental and spiritual nature.

The benefits of such an institution, and how it ought to be constituted so as to be free from the vices of an established church as at present understood, are questions too extensive to be further adverted to in this place. We will rather say, as being more pertinent to our present design, that if endowments (like the Church property) originally set apart for what was then deemed the highest spiritual culture, were diverted to the purposes of the highest spiritual culture which the intellect of the present age could devise, there would be no departure from the intentions of the original owners, but, on the contrary, a faithful fulfilment of them, when a literal and servile adherence to the mere *accidents* of the appropriation would be the surest means of defeating its essentials. We may add that the perfect lawfulness of such an alienation as this, is explicitly laid down by the eminent writer to whom we have referred. It is part of his doctrine, that the state is at liberty to withdraw the endowment from its existing possessors, whenever anybody or persons can be found, whether ministers of religion or not, by whom the ends of the establishment, as he understands them, are likely to be more perfectly fulfilled. It is the more important to place this admission upon record, as the most able and accomplished of the rising defenders of the Church of England have evidently issued from Mr. Coleridge's school, and have taken their weapons chiefly from his storehouse.

If, however, we seize upon the endowments of the Church, not for the civilization and cultivation of the

minds of our people, but to pay off a small fraction of the National Debt, or to supply a temporary financial exigency,—we shall not only squander for the benefit of a single generation, the inheritance of all posterity; we shall not only purchase an imperceptible good, by sacrificing a most important one; but by disregarding entirely the intentions of the original owners, we shall do our best to create a habit of paltering with the sacredness of a trust. It matters not that the property has now become *res nullius*, and is therefore, properly speaking, our own. It is none of our earning; others gave it to us, and for purposes which it may be a *duty* to set aside, but which cannot honestly be sacrificed to a *convenience*. We have not the slightest reason to believe that if the owners were alive, and still masters of their property, they would give it to us to be blown away in gunpowder, or to save a few years' house and window tax.

On a pressing exigency, as to avert a national bankruptcy, or repel a foreign invasion, the whole or any part of the endowment might be borrowed; as, in such a case, might any other property, public or private: but subject to the promptest possible repayment.

If any surplus remains, after as much has been done for cultivating the minds of the people, as it is thought advisable to do without making them pay for it, the residue may be unobjectionally applied to the ordinary purposes of government: though it should even then, we think, be considered as a fund still liable to be drawn upon, if hereafter required, for purposes of spiritual culture.

9. We have still to add a few words on the kinds of foundation which ought *not* to be permitted: after which we shall conclude.

No endowment should be suffered to be made, or funds to be legally appropriated, for any purpose which is actually *unlawful*. If the law has forbidden any act, has con-

stituted it an offence or injury, *every* mode of committing the act, or of instigating others to commit it, ought to be prohibited, not some particular modes only. But if the purpose for which the foundation is constituted be not illegal, but only, in the opinion of the legislature, inexpedient, we do not deem this to be a sufficient reason for denying to the appropriation the protection of the law. The grounds of this opinion may be sufficiently collected from the preceding observations.

The only other restriction which we would impose upon the authors of Foundations, is, that the endowment shall not consist of land. The evils of allowing land to pass into Mortmain are universally acknowledged ; and the trustees, besides, ought to have no concern with the money intrusted to them, except to apply it to its purposes. They may desire landed property as a source of power, which is a reason the more for refusing it to them : but as a source of income, it is not suited to their position. They should have only to receive an annuity, and that in the simplest and least troublesome manner : not to realize a rental from a multitude of tenants. Their time and attention ought not to be divided between their proper business and the duties of a landlord, or the superintendence and management of a landed estate.

The very first step in a general revision of the Foundations, and one which would be desirable even if the reform should go no further, would be to dispose of the estates of all the public trusts in Great Britain, by sale to the highest bidder, and invest the proceeds in the stocks or other monied securities. If the legislature were then to assert its right of control over all endowments of an origin anterior to a certain recent date, the exercise of this control should become a regular department of the administration, and the expenditure of the interest should be brought under the consideration of parliament in an annual report. For

until the execution of these trusts shall be subject to the common responsibility which attaches to other public functions, the endowments (at least the greater part of them) for any useful purpose might fully as well not exist.

WHAT IS POETRY?

WHAT IS POETRY?¹

IT has often been asked, What is Poetry? And many and various are the answers which have been returned. The vulgarest of all—one with which no person possessed of the faculties to which Poetry addresses itself can ever have been satisfied—is that which confounds poetry with metrical composition: yet to this wretched mockery of a definition, many have been led back, by the failure of all their attempts to find any other that would distinguish what they have been accustomed to call poetry, from much which they have known only under other names.

That, however, the word “poetry” *does* import something quite peculiar in its nature, something which may exist in what is called prose as well as in verse, something which does not even require the instrument of words, but can speak through those other audible symbols called musical sounds, and even through the visible ones, which are the language of sculpture, painting, and architecture; all this, as we believe, is and must be felt, though perhaps indistinctly, by all upon whom poetry in any of its shapes produces any impression beyond that of tickling the ear. To the mind, poetry is either nothing, or it is the better part of all art whatever, and of real life too; and the distinction between poetry and what is not poetry, whether explained or not, is felt to be fundamental.

¹ “Monthly Repository,” January, 1833.—ED.

Where everyone feels a difference, a difference there must be. All other appearances may be fallacious, but the appearance of a difference is a real difference. Appearances too, like other things, must have a cause, and that which can *cause* anything, even an illusion, must be a reality. And hence, while a half-philosophy disdains the classifications and distinctions indicated by popular language, philosophy carried to its highest point may frame new ones, but never sets aside the old, content with correcting and regularizing them. It cuts fresh channels for thought, but it does not fill up such as it finds ready-made, but it traces, on the contrary, more deeply, broadly, and distinctly, those into which the current has spontaneously flowed.

Let us then attempt, in the way of modest inquiry, not to coerce and confine nature within the bounds of an arbitrary definition, but rather to find the boundaries which she herself has set, and erect a barrier round them ; not calling mankind to account for having misapplied the word "poetry," but attempting to clear up the conception which they already attach to it, and to bring before their minds as a distinct *principle* that which, as a vague *feeling*, has really guided them in their actual employment of the term.

The object of poetry is confessedly to act upon the emotions ; and therein is poetry sufficiently distinguished from what Wordsworth affirms to be its logical opposite, namely, not prose, but matter of fact or science. The one addresses itself to the belief, the other to the feelings. The one does its work by convincing or persuading, the other by moving. The one acts by presenting a proposition to the understanding, the other by offering interesting objects of contemplation to the sensibilities.

This, however, leaves us very far from a definition of poetry. We have distinguished it from one thing, but we

are bound to distinguish it from everything. To bring thoughts or images to the mind for the purpose of acting upon the emotions, does not belong to poetry alone. It is equally the province (for example) of the novelist: and yet the faculty of the poet and that of the novelist are as distinct as any other two faculties; and the faculty of the novelist and of the orator, or of the poet and the metaphysician. The two characters may be united, as characters the most disparate may; but they have no natural connection.

Many of the finest poems are in the form of novels, and in almost all good novels there is true poetry. But there is a radical distinction between the interest felt in a novel as such, and the interest excited by poetry; for the one is derived from *incident*, the other from the representation of *feeling*. In one, the source of the emotion excited is the exhibition of a state or states of human sensibility; in the other, of a series of states of mere outward circumstances. Now, all minds are capable of being affected more or less by representations of the latter kind, and all, or almost all, by those of the former; yet the two sources of interest correspond to two distinct, and (as respects their greatest development) mutually exclusive, characters of mind. [So much is the nature of poetry dissimilar to the nature of fictitious narrative, that to have a really strong passion for either of the two, seems to presuppose or to superinduce a comparative indifference to the other.]

At what age is the passion for a story, for almost any kind of story, merely as a story, the most intense?—in childhood. But that also is the age at which poetry, even of the simplest description, is least relished and least understood; because the feelings with which it is especially conversant are yet undeveloped, and not having been even in the slightest degree experienced, cannot be sympathized with. In what stage of the progress of society, again,

is story-telling most valued, and the story-teller in greatest request and honour?—in a rude state; like that of the Tartars and Arabs at this day, and of almost all nations in the earliest ages. But in this state of society there is little poetry except ballads, which are mostly narrative, that is, essentially *stories*, and derive their principal interest from the *incidents*. Considered as poetry, they are of the lowest and most elementary kind: the feelings depicted, or rather indicated, are the simplest our nature has; such joys and griefs as the immediate pressure of some outward event excites in rude minds, which live wholly immersed in outward things, and have never, either from choice or a force they could not resist, turned themselves to the contemplation of the world within. Passing now from childhood, and from the childhood of society, to the grown-up men—and women of this most grown-up and unchildlike age—the minds and hearts of greatest depth and elevation are commonly those which take greatest delight in poetry; the shallowest and emptiest, on the contrary, are, by universal remark, the most addicted to novel-reading. This accords, too, with all analogous experience of human nature. The sort of persons whom not merely in books but in their lives, we find perpetually engaged in hunting for excitement from without, are invariably those who do not possess, either in the vigour of their intellectual powers or in the depth of their sensibilities, that which would enable them to find ample excitement nearer at home. The same persons whose time is divided between sight-seeing, gossip, and fashionable dissipation, take a natural delight in fictitious narrative; the excitement it affords is of the kind which comes from without. Such persons are rarely lovers of poetry, though they may fancy themselves so, because they relish novels in verse. But poetry, which is the delineation of the deeper and more secret workings of the human heart, is interesting only to those to whom it recalls what

they have felt, or whose imagination it stirs up to conceive what they could feel, or what they might have been able to feel had their outward circumstances been different.

Poetry, when it is really such, is truth; and fiction also, if it is good for anything, is truth: but they are different truths. The truth of poetry is to paint the human soul truly: the truth of fiction is to give a true picture of *life*. The two kinds of knowledge are different, and come by different ways, come mostly to different persons. Great poets are often proverbially ignorant of life. What they know has come by observation of themselves; they have found *there* one highly delicate, and sensitive, and refine specimen of human nature, on which the laws of emotion are written in large characters, such as can be read off without much study: and other knowledge of mankind, such as comes to men of the world by outward experience, is not indispensable to them as poets: but to the novelist such knowledge is all in all; he has to describe outward things, not the inward man; actions and events, not feelings; and it will not do for him to be numbered among those who, as Madame Roland said of Brissot, know man but not *men*.

All this is no bar to the possibility of combining both elements, poetry and narrative or incident, in the same work, and calling it either a novel or a poem; but so may red and white combine on the same human features, or on the same canvas; [and so may oil and vinegar, though opposite natures, blend together in the same composite taste.] There is one order of composition which requires the union of poetry and incident, each in its highest kind—the dramatic. Even there the two elements are perfectly distinguishable, and may exist of unequal quality, and in the most various proportion. The incidents of a dramatic poem may be scanty and ineffective, though the

delineation of passion and character may be of the highest order ; as in Goethe's glorious "Torquato Tasso:" or again, the story as a mere story may be well got up for effect, as is the case with some the most trashy productions of the Minerva press:¹ it may even be, what those are not, a coherent and probable series of events, though there be scarcely a feeling exhibited which is not represented falsely, or in a manner absolutely common-place. The combination of the two excellencies is what renders Shakespeare so generally acceptable, each sort of readers finding in him what is suitable to their faculties. To the many he is great as a story-teller, to the few as a poet.

In limiting poetry to the delineation of states of feeling, and denying the name where nothing is delineated but outward objects, we may be thought to have done what we promised to avoid—to have not *found*, but *made* a definition, in opposition to the usage of the English language, since it is established by common consent that there is a poetry called *descriptive*. We deny the charge. Description is not poetry because there is descriptive poetry, no more than science is poetry because there is such a thing as a didactic poem [; no more, we might almost say, than Greek or Latin is poetry because there are Greek and Latin poems]. But an object which admits of being described, or a truth which may fill a place in a scientific treatise, may *also* furnish an occasion for the generation of poetry, which we thereupon choose to call descriptive or didactic. The poetry is not in the object itself, nor in the scientific truth itself, but in the state of mind in which the one and the other may be contemplated. The mere delineation of the dimensions and colours of external objects is not poetry, no more than a geometrical ground-plan of St. Peter's or Westminster Abbey is painting. Descriptive

¹ Published by the firm of Newman, at the corner of Cornhill and Bishopsgate Street.—ED.

poetry consists, no doubt, in description, but in description of things as they appear, not as they *are*; and it paints them not in their bare and natural lineaments, but arranged in the colours and seen through the medium of the imagination set in action by the feelings. If a poet is to describe a lion, he will not set about describing him as a naturalist would, nor even as a traveller would, who was intent upon stating the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. He describes him by *imagery*, that is, by suggesting the most striking likenesses and contrasts which might occur to a mind contemplating the lion, in the state of awe, wonder, or terror, which the spectacle naturally excites, or is, on the occasion, supposed to excite. Now this is describing the lion professedly, but the state of excitement of the spectator really. The lion may be described falsely or in exaggerated colours, and the poetry be all the better; but if the human emotion be not painted with the most scrupulous truth, the poetry is bad poetry, *i.e.* is not poetry at all, but a failure.

Thus far our progress towards a clear view of the essentials of poetry has brought us very close to the last two attempts at a definition of poetry which we happen to have seen in print, both of them by poets and men of genius. The one is by Ebenezer Elliott, the author of "Corn-Law Rhymes," and other poems of still greater merit.¹ "Poetry," says he, "is impassioned truth." The other is by a writer in Blackwood's Magazine, and comes, we think, still nearer the mark. He defines poetry, "man's thoughts tinged by his feelings." There is in either definition a near approximation to what we are in search of. Every truth which man can announce, every thought, even every outward impression, which can enter into his consciousness, may become poetry when shewn through

¹ He contributed to the "Monthly Repository," in which this essay appeared.—ED.

any impassioned medium, when invested with the colouring of joy, or grief, or pity, or affection, or admiration, or reverence, or awe, or even hatred or terror : and, unless so coloured, nothing, be it as interesting as it may, is poetry. But both these definitions fail to discriminate between poetry and eloquence. Eloquence, as well as poetry, is impassioned truth : eloquence, as well as poetry, is thoughts coloured by the feelings. Yet common apprehension and philosophic criticism alike recognize a distinction between the two : there is much that everyone would call eloquence, which no one would think of classing as poetry. A question will sometimes arise, whether some particular author is a poet ; and those who maintain the negative commonly allow, that though not a poet, he is a highly *eloquent* writer. The distinction between poetry and eloquence appears to us to be equally fundamental with the distinction between poetry and narrative, or between poetry and description. It is still farther from having been satisfactorily cleared up than either of the others [, unless, which is highly probable, the German artists and critics have thrown some light upon it which has not yet reached us. Without a perfect knowledge of what they have written, it is something like presumption to write upon such subjects at all, and we shall be the foremost to urge that, whatever we may be about to submit, may be received, subject to correction from *them*].

Poetry and eloquence are both alike the expression or uttering forth of feeling. But if we may be excused the antithesis, we should say that eloquence is *heard*, poetry is *overheard*. Eloquence supposes an audience ; the peculiarity of poetry appears to us to lie in the poet's utter unconsciousness of a listener. Poetry is feeling, confessing itself to itself in moments of solitude, and embodying itself in symbols, which are the nearest possible representations of the feeling in the exact shape in which it exists in the

poet's mind. Eloquence is feeling pouring itself out to other minds, courting their sympathy, or endeavouring to influence their belief, or move them to passion or to action.

All poetry is of the nature of soliloquy. It may be said that poetry which is printed on hot-pressed paper and sold at a bookseller's shop, is a soliloquy in full dress, and on the stage. But there is nothing absurd in the idea of such a mode of soliloquizing. What we have said to ourselves, we may tell to others afterwards; what we have said or done in solitude, we may voluntarily reproduce when we know that other eyes are upon us. But no trace of consciousness that any eyes are upon us must be visible in the work itself. The actor knows that there is an audience present; but if he act as though he knew it, he acts ill. A poet may write poetry with the intention of publishing it; he may write it even for the express purpose of being paid for it; that it should *be* poetry, being written under such influences, is far less probable; not, however, impossible; but no otherwise possible than if he can succeed in excluding from his work every vestige of such lookings-forth into the outward and every-day world, and can express his feelings exactly as he has felt them in solitude, or as he feels that he should feel them, though they were to remain for ever unuttered. But when he turns round and addresses himself to another person; when the act of utterance is not itself the end, but a means to an end—viz. by the feelings he himself expresses, to work upon the feelings, or upon the belief, or the will, of another,—when the expression of his emotions, or of his thoughts tinged by his emotions, is tinged also by that purpose, by that desire of making an impression upon another mind, then it ceases to be poetry, and becomes eloquence.

Poetry, accordingly, is the natural fruit of solitude and meditation; eloquence, of intercourse with the world. The

persons who have most feeling of their own, if intellectual culture have given them a language in which to express it, have the highest faculty of poetry; those who best understand the feelings of others, are the most eloquent. The persons, and the nations, who commonly excel in poetry, are those whose character and tastes render them least dependent for their happiness upon the applause, or sympathy, or concurrence of the world in general. Those to whom that applause, that sympathy, that concurrence are most necessary, generally excel most in eloquence. And hence, perhaps, the French, who are the *least* poetical of all great and refined nations, are among the most eloquent: the French, also, being the most sociable, the vainest, and the least self-dependent.

If the above be, as we believe, the true theory of the distinction commonly admitted between eloquence and poetry; or though it be not *that*, yet if, as we cannot doubt, the distinction above stated be a real *bonâ fide* distinction, it will be found to hold, not merely in the language of words, but in all other language, and to intersect the whole domain of art.

Take, for example, music: we shall find in that art, so peculiarly the expression of passion, two perfectly distinct styles; one of which may be called the poetry, the other the oratory of music. This difference, being seized, would put an end to much musical sectarianism. There has been much contention whether the character of Rossini's music—the music, we mean, which is characteristic of that composer—is compatible with the expression of passion. Without doubt, the passion it expresses is not the musing, meditative tenderness, or pathos, or grief of Mozart, the great poet of his art. Yet it is passion, but *garrulous* passion—the passion which pours itself into other ears; and therein the better calculated for *dramatic* effect, having a natural adaptation for dialogue. Mozart also is great in

musical oratory; but his most touching compositions are in the opposite style—that of soliloquy. Who can imagine “Dove sono” *heard*? We imagine it *overheard*.

* * * *

Purely pathetic music commonly partakes of soliloquy. The soul is absorbed in its distress, and though there may be bystanders, it is not thinking of them. When the mind is looking within, and not without, its state does not often or rapidly vary; and hence the even, uninterrupted flow, approaching almost to monotony, which a good reader, or a good singer, will give to words or music of a pensive or melancholy cast. But grief taking the form of a prayer, or of a complaint, becomes oratorical; no longer low, and even, and subdued, it assumes a more emphatic rhythm, a more rapidly returning accent; instead of a few slow equal notes, following one after another at regular intervals, it crowds note upon note, and oftentimes assumes a hurry and bustle like joy. Those who are familiar with some of the best of Rossini's serious compositions, such as the air “Tu che i miseri conforti,” in the opera of “Tancredi,” or the duet “Ebben per mia memoria,” in “La Gazza Ladra,” will at once understand and feel our meaning. Both are highly tragic and passionate; the passion of both is that of oratory, not poetry. The like may be said of that most moving prayer in Beethoven's “Fidelio”—

“Kommi, Hoffnung, lass das letzte Stern
Der Müde nicht erbleichen;”

in which Madame Devrient last summer exhibited such consummate powers of pathetic expression. How different from Winter's beautiful “Paga fui,” the very soul of melancholy exhaling itself in solitude; fuller of meaning, and, therefore, more profoundly poetical than the words for which it was composed—for it seems to express not simple melancholy, but the melancholy of remorse.

If, from vocal music, we now pass to instrumental, we may have a specimen of musical oratory in any fine military symphony or march: while the poetry of music seems to have attained its consummation in Beethoven's Overture to Egmont. We question whether so deep an expression of mixed grandeur and melancholy was ever in any other instance produced by mere sounds.

In the arts which speak to the eye, the same distinctions will be found to hold, not only between poetry and oratory, but between poetry, oratory, narrative, and simple imitation or description.

Pure *description* is exemplified in a *mere* portrait or a *mere* landscape—productions of art, it is true, but of the mechanical rather than of the fine arts, being works of simple imitation, not *creation*. We say, a *mere* portrait, or a *mere* landscape, because it is possible for a portrait or a landscape, without ceasing to be such, to be also a picture. [A portrait by Lawrence, or one of Turner's views, is not a mere copy from nature: the one combines with the given features that particular expression (among all good and pleasing ones) which those features are most capable of wearing, and which, therefore, in combination with them, is capable of producing the greatest positive beauty. Turner, again, unites the objects of the given landscape with whatever sky, and whatever light and shade, enable those particular objects to impress the imagination most strongly. In both, there is *creative* art—not working after an actual model, but realizing an idea.]

Whatever in painting or sculpture expresses human feeling—or *character*, which is only a certain state of feeling grown habitual—may be called, according to circumstances, the poetry, or the eloquence, of the painter's or the sculptor's art; the poetry, if the feeling declares itself by such signs as escape from us when we are unconscious of being seen; the oratory, if the signs

are those we use for the purpose of voluntary communication.

[The poetry of painting seems to be carried to its highest perfection in the Peasant Girl of Rembrandt, or in any Madonna or Magdalen of Guido; that of sculpture, in almost any of the Greek statues of the gods; not considering these in respect to the mere physical beauty, of which they are such perfect models, nor undertaking either to vindicate or to contest the opinion of philosophers, that even physical beauty is ultimately resolvable into expression; we may safely affirm that, in no other of man's works did so much of soul ever shine through mere inanimate matter.]

The narrative style answers to what is called historical painting, which it is the fashion among connoisseurs to treat as the climax of the pictorial art. That it is the most difficult branch of the art we do not doubt, because, in its perfection, it includes, in a manner, the perfection of all the other branches. As an epic poem, though in so far as it is epic (*i.e.* narrative), it is not poetry at all, is yet esteemed the greatest effort of poetic genius, because there is no kind whatever of poetry which may not appropriately find a place in it. But a historical picture as such, that is, as the representation of an incident, must necessarily, as it seems to us, be poor and ineffective. The narrative powers of painting are extremely limited. Scarcely any picture, scarcely any series even of pictures, tells its own story without the aid of an interpreter; [you must know the story beforehand; *then*, indeed, you may see great beauty and appropriateness in the painting.] But it is the single figures which, to us, are the great charm even of a historical picture. It is in these that the power of the art is really seen: in the attempt to *narrate*, visible and permanent signs are far behind the fugitive audible ones, which follow so fast one after another, while the faces and figures in a

narrative picture, even though they be Titian's, stand still. Who would not prefer one Virgin and Child of Raphael to all the pictures which Rubens, with his fat, frouzy Dutch Venuses, ever painted? Though Rubens, besides excelling almost everyone in his mastery over the mechanical parts of his art, often shows real genius in *grouping* his figures, the peculiar problem of historical painting. But then, who, except a mere student of drawing and colouring, ever cared to look twice at any of the figures themselves? The power of painting lies in poetry, of which Rubens had not the slightest tincture—not in narrative, where he might have excelled.

The single figures, however, in an historical picture, are rather the *eloquence* of painting than the poetry: they mostly (unless they are quite out of place in the picture) express the feelings of one person as modified by the presence of others. Accordingly the minds whose bent leads them rather to eloquence than to poetry, rush to historical painting. The French painters, for instance, seldom attempt, because they could make nothing of, single heads, like those glorious ones of the Italian masters, with which they might glut themselves day after day in their own Louvre. They must all be *historical*; and they are, almost to a man, attitudinizers. If we wished to give any young artist the most impressive warning our imaginations could devise against that kind of vice in the pictorial, which corresponds to rant in the histrionic art, we would advise him to walk once up and once down the gallery of the Luxembourg [; even now when David, the great corrupter of taste, has been translated from this world to the next, and from the Luxembourg, consequently, into the more elevated sphere of the Louvre]. Every figure in French painting or statuary seems to be showing itself off before spectators: they are in the worst style of corrupted eloquence, but in no style of poetry at all. The best

are stiff and unnatural; the worst resemble figures of cataleptic patients. The French artists fancy themselves imitators of the classics, yet they seem to have no understanding and no feeling of that *reposé*, which was the peculiar and pervading character of Grecian art, until it began to decline: a repose tenfold more indicative of strength than all their stretching and straining; for strength, as Thomas Carlyle says. does not manifest itself in spasms.

There are some productions of art which it seems at first difficult to arrange in any of the classes above illustrated. The direct aim of art as such, is the production of the *beautiful*; and as there are other things beautiful beside states of mind, there is much of art which may seem to have nothing to do with either poetry or eloquence as we have defined them. Take for instance a composition of Claude, or Salvator Rosa. There is here *creation* of new beauty; by the grouping of natural scenery, conformable indeed to the laws of outward nature, but not after any actual model; the result being a beauty more perfect and faultless than is perhaps to be found in any actual landscape. Yet there is a character of poetry even in these, without which they could not be so beautiful. The unity, and wholeness, the æsthetic congruity of the picture still lies in singleness of expression; but it is expressed in a different sense from that in which we have hitherto employed them. The objects of an imaginary landscape cannot be said, like the words of a poem or the notes of a melody, to be the actual utterance of a feeling; but there must be some feeling with which they harmonize, and which they have a tendency to raise up in the spectator's mind. They must inspire a feeling of grandeur, a loveliness, a cheerfulness, a wildness, a melancholy, a terror. The painter must surround his principal objects with such imagery as would spontaneously arise in a highly imagina-

tive mind, when contemplating those objects under the impression of the feelings which they are intended to inspire. This, if it be not poetry, is nearly allied to it, as scarcely to require being distinguished.

In this sense we may speak of the poetry of architecture. All architecture, to be impressive, must be the expression or symbol of some interesting idea ; some thought, which has power over the emotions. The reason why modern architecture is so paltry, is simply that it is not the expression of an idea ; it is a mere parroting of the architectural tongue of the Greeks, or of our Teutonic ancestors, without any conception of a meaning.

To confine ourselves, for the present, to religious edifices ; these partake of poetry, in proportion as they express, or harmonize with, the feelings of devotion. But those feelings are different according to the conception entertained of the beings, by whose supposed nature they are called forth. To the Greek, these beings were incarnations of the greatest conceivable physical beauty, combined with supernatural power ; and the Greek temples express this, their predominant character being graceful strength ; in other words, solidity, which is power, and lightness which is also power, accomplishing with small means what seemed to require great ; to combine all in one word, *majesty*. To the Catholic, again, the Deity was something far less clear and definite ; a being of still more resistless power than the heathen divinities ; greatly to be loved ; still more greatly to be feared ; and wrapped up in vagueness, mystery, and incomprehensibility. A certain solemnity, a feeling of doubting and trembling hope, like that of one lost in a boundless forest who thinks he knows his way but is not sure, mixes itself in all the genuine expressions of Catholic devotion. This is eminently the expression of the pure Gothic cathedral ; conspicuous equally in the mingled majesty and gloom of its vaulted roofs and stately aisles,

and in the "dim religious light" which steals through its painted windows.

There is no generic distinction between the imagery which is the *expression* and the imagery which is felt to *harmonize* with feeling. They are identical. The imagery in which feeling utters itself forth from within, is also that in which it delights when presented to it from without. All art, therefore, in proportion as it produces its effects by an appeal to the emotions partakes of poetry, unless it partakes of oratory, or of narrative. And the distinction which these three words indicate, runs through the whole field of the fine arts.

The above hints have no pretension to the character of a theory. They are merely thrown out for the consideration of thinkers, in the hope that if they do not contain the truth, they may do somewhat to suggest it. Nor would they, crude as they are, have been deemed worthy of publication, in any country but one in which the philosophy of art is so completely neglected, that whatever may serve to put any inquiring mind upon this kind of investigation, cannot well, however imperfect in itself, fail altogether to be of use.

ANTIQUUS.

THE TWO KINDS OF POETRY.

1833.

THE TWO KINDS OF POETRY.

NASCITUR POËTA is a maxim of classical antiquity, which has passed to these latter days with less questioning than most of the doctrines of that early age. When it originated, the human faculties were occupied, fortunately for posterity, less in examining how the works of genius are created, than in creating them: and the adage, probably, had no higher source than the tendency common among mankind to consider all power which is not visibly the effect of practice, all skill which is not capable of being reduced to mechanical rules, as the result of a peculiar gift. Yet this aphorism, born in the infancy of psychology, will perhaps be found, now when that science is in its adolescence, to be as true as an epigram ever is, that is, to contain some truth: truth, however, which has been so compressed and bent out of shape, in order to tie it up into so small a knot of only two words, that it requires an almost infinite amount of unrolling and laying straight, before it will resume its just proportions.

We are not now intending to remark upon the grosser misapplications of this ancient maxim, which have engendered so many races of poetasters. The days are gone by, when every raw youth whose borrowed phantasies have set themselves to a borrowed tune, mistaking, as Coleridge says, an ardent desire of poetic reputation for poetic genius, while unable to disguise from himself that he had taken no

means whereby he might *become* a poet, could fancy himself a born one. Those who would reap without sowing, and gain the victory without fighting the battle, are ambitious now of another sort of distinction, and are born novelists, or public speakers, not poets. And the wiser thinkers begin to understand and acknowledge that poetic excellence is subject to the same necessary conditions with any other mental endowment; and that to no one of the spiritual benefactors of mankind is a higher or a more assiduous intellectual culture needful than to the poet. It is true, he possesses this advantage over others who use the "instrument of words," that, of the truths which he utters, a larger proportion are derived from personal consciousness, and a smaller from philosophic investigation. But the power itself of discriminating between what really is consciousness, and what is only a process of inference completed in a single instant; and the capacity of distinguishing whether that of which the mind is conscious be an eternal truth, or but a dream—are among the last results of the most matured and perfect intellect. Not to mention that the poet, no more than any other person who writes, confines himself altogether to intuitive truths, nor has any means of communicating even these but by words, every one of which derives all its power of conveying a meaning, from a whole host of acquired notions, and facts learnt by study and experience.

Nevertheless, it seems undeniable in point of fact, and consistent with the principles of a sound metaphysics, that there are poetic *natures*. There is a mental and physical constitution or temperament, peculiarly fitted for poetry. This temperament will not of itself make a poet, no more than the soil will the fruit; and as good fruit may be raised by culture from indifferent soils, so may good poetry from naturally unpoetical minds. But the poetry of one who is a poet by nature, will be clearly and

broadly distinguishable from the poetry of mere culture. It may not be truer; it may not be more useful; but it will be different: fewer will appreciate it, even though many should affect to do so; but in those few it will find a keener sympathy, and will yield them a deeper enjoyment.

One may write genuine poetry, and not be a poet; for whosoever writes out truly any one human feeling, writes poetry. All persons, even the most unimaginative, in moments of strong emotion, speak poetry; and hence the drama is poetry, which else were always prose, except when a poet is one of the characters. What *is* poetry, but the thoughts and words in which emotion spontaneously embodies itself? As there are few who are not, at least for *some* moments and in *some* situations, capable of *some* strong feeling, poetry is natural to most persons at some period of their lives. And anyone whose feelings are genuine, though but of the average strength,—if he be not diverted by uncongenial thoughts or occupations from the indulgence of them, and if he acquire by culture, as all persons may, the faculty of delineating them correctly,—has it in his power to be a poet, so far as a life passed in writing unquestionable poetry may be considered to confer that title. But *ought* it to do so? yes, perhaps, in the table of contents of a collection of “British Poets.” But “poet” is the name also of a variety of *man*, not solely of the author of a particular variety of *book*: now, to have written whole volumes of real poetry, is possible to almost all kinds of characters, and implies no greater peculiarity of mental construction than to be the author of a history or a novel.

Whom, then, shall we call poets? Those who are so constituted, that emotions are the links of association by which their ideas, both sensuous and spiritual, are connected together. This constitution belongs (within certain limits) to all in whom poetry is a pervading principle. In all

others, poetry is something extraneous and superinduced: something out of themselves, foreign to the habitual course of their everyday lives and characters; a quite other world, to which they may make occasional visits, but where they are sojourners, not dwellers, and which, when out of it, or even when in it, they think of, peradventure, but as a phantom-world, a place of *ignes fatui* and spectral illusions. Those only who have the peculiarity of association which we have mentioned, and which is one of the consequences of intense sensibility, instead of seeming not themselves when they are uttering poetry, scarcely seem themselves when uttering anything to which poetry is foreign. Whatever be the thing which they are contemplating, the aspect under which it first and most naturally paints itself to them, is its poetic aspect. The poet of culture sees his object in prose, and describes it in poetry; the poet of nature actually sees it in poetry.

This point is perhaps worth some little illustration; the rather, as metaphysicians (the ultimate arbiters of all philosophical criticism), while they have busied themselves for two thousand years, more or less, about the few *universal* laws of human nature, have strangely neglected the analysis of its *diversities*. Of these, none lie deeper or reach further than the varieties which difference of nature and of education makes in what may be termed the habitual bond of association. In a mind entirely uncultivated, which is also without any strong feelings, objects, whether of sense or of intellect, arrange themselves in the mere casual order in which they have been seen, heard, or otherwise perceived. Persons of this sort may be said to think chronologically. If they remember a fact, it is by reason of a fortuitous coincidence with some trifling incident or circumstance which took place at the very time. If they have a story to tell, or testimony to deliver in a witness-box, their narrative must follow the exact order in which the events took

place : *dodge* them, and the thread of association is broken ; they cannot go on. Their associations, to use the language of philosophers, are chiefly of the successive, not the synchronous kind, and whether successive or synchronous, are mostly *casual*.

To the man of science, again, or of business, objects group themselves according to the artificial classifications which the understanding has voluntarily made for the convenience of thought or of practice. But where any of the impressions are vivid and intense, the associations into which these enter are the ruling ones : it being a well-known law of association, that the stronger a feeling is, the more quickly and strongly it associates itself with any other object or feeling. Where, therefore, nature has given strong feelings, and education has not created factitious tendencies stronger than the natural ones, the prevailing associations will be those which connect objects and ideas with emotions, and with each other through the intervention of emotions. Thoughts and images will be linked together, according to the similarity of the feelings which cling to them. A thought will introduce a thought by first introducing a feeling which is allied with it. At the centre of each group of thoughts or images will be found a feeling ; and the thoughts or images are only there because the feeling was there. All the combinations which the mind puts together, all the pictures which it paints, the wholes which Imagination constructs out of the materials supplied by Fancy, will be indebted to some dominant *feeling*, not as in other natures to a dominant *thought*, for their unity and consistency of character—for what distinguishes them from incoherencies.

The difference, then, between the poetry of a poet, and the poetry of a cultivated but not naturally poetic mind, is, that in the latter, with however bright a halo of feeling the thought may be surrounded and glorified, the thought

itself is still the conspicuous object ; while the poetry of a poet is Feeling itself, employing Thought only as the medium of its utterance. In the one, feeling waits upon thought ; in the other, thought upon feeling. The one writer has a distinct aim, common to him with any other didactic author ; he desires to convey the thought, and he conveys it clothed in the feelings which it excites in himself, or which he deems most appropriate to it. The other merely pours forth the overflowing of his feelings ; and all the thoughts which those feelings suggest are floated promiscuously along the stream.

It may assist in rendering our meaning intelligible, if we illustrate it by a parallel between the two English authors of our own day who have produced the greatest quantity of true and enduring poetry, Wordsworth and Shelley. Apter instances could not be wished for ; the one might be cited as the type, the *exemplar*, of what the poetry of culture may accomplish ; the other as perhaps the most striking example ever known of the poetic temperament. How different, accordingly, is the poetry of these two great writers ! In Wordsworth, the poetry is almost always the mere setting of a thought. The thought may be more valuable than the setting, or it may be less valuable, but there can be no question as to which was first in his mind : what he is impressed with, and what he is anxious to impress, is some proposition, more or less distinctly conceived ; some truth, or something which he deems such. He lets the thought dwell in his mind, till it excites, as is the nature of thought, other thoughts, and also such feelings as the measure of his sensibility is adequate to supply. Among these thoughts and feelings, had he chosen a different walk of authorship (and there are many in which he might equally have excelled), he would probably have made a different selection of media for enforcing the parent-thought : his habits, however,

being those of poetic composition, he selects in preference the strongest feelings, and the thoughts with which most of feeling is naturally or habitually connected. His poetry, therefore, may be defined to be, his thoughts, coloured by, and impressing themselves by means of, emotions. Such poetry, Wordsworth has occupied a long life in producing. And well and wisely has he so done. Criticisms, no doubt, may be made occasionally both upon the thoughts themselves, and upon the skill he has demonstrated in the choice of his *media*: for, an affair of skill and study, in the most rigorous sense, it evidently was. But he has not laboured in vain: he has exercised, and continues to exercise, a powerful, and mostly a highly beneficial influence over the formation and growth of not a few of the most cultivated and vigorous of the youthful minds of our time, over whose heads poetry of the opposite description would have flown, for want of an original organization, physical and mental, in sympathy with it.

On the other hand, Wordsworth's poetry is never bounding, never ebullient: has little even of the appearance of spontaneousness: the well is never so full that it overflows. There is an air of calm deliberateness about all he writes, which is not characteristic of the poetic temperament: his poetry seems one thing, himself another; he seems to be poetical because he wills to be so, not because he cannot help it: did he will to dismiss poetry, he need never again, it might almost seem, have a poetical thought. He never seems *possessed* by any feeling; no emotion seems ever so strong as to have entire sway, for the time being, over the current of his thoughts. He never, even for the space of a few stanzas, appears entirely *given up* to exultation, or grief, or pity, or love, or admiration, or devotion, or even animal spirits. He now and then, though seldom, *attempts* to write as if he were; and never, we think, without leaving an impression of poverty: as the brook which

on nearly level ground quite fills its banks, appears but a thread when running rapidly down a precipitous declivity. He has feeling enough to form a decent, graceful, even beautiful decoration to a thought which is in itself interesting and moving; but not so much as suffices to stir up the soul by mere sympathy with itself in its simplest manifestation, nor enough to summon up that array of "thoughts of power" which in a richly stored mind always attends the call of really intense feeling. It is for this reason, doubtless, that the genius of Wordsworth is essentially unlyrical. Lyric poetry, as it was the earliest kind, is also, if the view we are now taking of poetry be correct, more eminently and peculiarly poetry than any other: it is the poetry most natural to a really poetic temperament, and least capable of being successfully imitated by one not so endowed by nature. [Wordsworth's attempts in that strain, if we may venture to say so much of a man whom we so exceedingly admire, appear to us cold and spiritless.]

Shelley is the very reverse of all this. Where Wordsworth is strong, he is weak; where Wordsworth is weak, he is strong. Culture, that culture by which Wordsworth has reared from his own inward nature the richest harvest ever brought forth by a soil of so little depth, is precisely what was wanting to Shelley: or let us rather say, he had not, at the period of his deplorably early death, reached sufficiently far in that intellectual progression of which he was capable, and which, if it has done so much for far inferior natures, might have made of him the greatest of our poets. For him, intentional mental discipline had done little; the vividness of his emotions and of his sensations had done all. He seldom follows up an idea; it starts into life, summons from the fairy-land of his inexhaustible fancy some three or four bold images, then vanishes, and straight he is off on the wings of some casual association into quite another sphere. He had not yet

acquired the consecutiveness of thought necessary for a long poem; his more ambitious compositions too often resemble the scattered fragments of a mirror; colours brilliant as life, single images without end, but no picture. It is only when under the overruling influence of some one state of feeling, either actually experienced, or summoned up in almost the vividness of reality by a fervid imagination, that he writes as a great poet; unity of feeling being to him the harmonizing principle which a central idea is to minds of another class, and supplying the coherency and consistency which would else have been wanting. Thus it is in many of his smaller, and especially his lyrical poems. They are obviously written to exhale, perhaps to relieve, a state of feeling, or of conception of feeling, almost oppressive from its vividness. The thoughts and imagery are suggested by the feeling, and are such as it finds unsought. The state of feeling may be either of soul or of sense, or oftener (might we not say invariably?) of both; for the poetic temperament is usually, perhaps always, accompanied by exquisite senses. The exciting cause may be either an object or an idea. But whatever of sensation enters into the feeling, must not be local, or consciously bodily; it is a state of the whole frame, not of a part only; like the state of sensation produced by a fine climate, or indeed like all strongly pleasurable or painful sensations in an impassioned nature, it pervades the entire nervous system. States of feeling, whether sensuous or spiritual, which thus possess the whole being, are the fountains of that poetry, which we have called the poetry of poets; and which is little else than the utterance of the thoughts and images that pass across the mind while some permanent state of feeling is occupying it.

To the same original fineness of organization, Shelley was doubtless indebted for another of his rarest gifts, that exuberance of imagery, which when unrepressed, as in

many of his poems it is, amounts even to a vice. The susceptibility of his nervous system, which made his emotions intense, made also the impressions of his external senses deep and clear: and agreeably to the law of association by which, as already remarked, the strongest impressions are those which associate themselves the most easily and strongly, these vivid sensations were readily recalled to mind by all objects or thoughts which had co-existed with them, by all feelings which in any degree resembled them. Never did a fancy so teem with sensuous imagery as Shelley's. Wordsworth economizes an image, and detains it until he has distilled all the poetry out of it, and it will not yield a drop more: Shelley lavishes his with a profusion which is unconscious because it is inexhaustible. The one like a thrifty housewife, uses all his materials and wastes none: the other scatters them with a reckless prodigality of wealth of which there is perhaps no similar instance.

If, then, the maxim *nascitur poëta*, mean, either that the power of producing poetical compositions is a peculiar faculty which the poet brings into the world with him, which grows with his growth like any of his bodily powers, and is as independent of culture as his height, and his complexion; or that any natural peculiarity *whatever* is implied in producing poetry, real poetry, and in any quantity—such poetry too, as, to the majority of educated and intelligent readers, shall appear quite as good as, or even better than, any other; in either sense the doctrine is false. And nevertheless, there *is* poetry which could not emanate but from a mental and physical constitution peculiar, not in the *kind*, but in the *degree* of its susceptibility: a constitution which makes its possessor capable of greater happiness than mankind in general, and also of greater unhappiness; and because greater, so also more various. And such poetry, to all who know enough of

nature to own it as being *in* nature, is much *more* poetry, is poetry in a far higher sense, than any other; since the common element of all poetry, that which constitutes poetry, human feeling, enters far more largely into this than into the poetry of culture. Not only because the natures which we have called poetical, really feel more, and consequently have more feeling to express; but because, the capacity of feeling being so great, feeling, when excited and not voluntarily resisted, seizes the helm of their thoughts, and the succession of ideas and images becomes the mere utterance of an emotion; not, as in other natures, the emotion a mere ornamental colouring of the thought.

Ordinary education and the ordinary course of life are constantly at work counteracting this quality of mind, and substituting habits more suitable to their own end: if instead of *substituting*, they were content to *superadd*, then there were nothing to complain of. But when will education consist, not in repressing any mental faculty or power, from the uncontrolled action of which danger is apprehended, but in training up to its proper strength the corrective and antagonist power?

In whomsoever the quality which we have described exists, and is not stifled, that person is a poet. Doubtless he is a *greater* poet in proportion as the fineness of his perceptions, whether of sense or of internal consciousness, furnishes him with an ampler supply of lovely images—the vigour and richness of his intellect with a greater abundance of moving thoughts. For it is through these thoughts and images that the feeling speaks, and through their impressiveness that it impresses itself, and finds response in other hearts; and from these media of transmitting it (contrary to the laws of physical nature) increase of intensity is reflected back upon the feeling itself. But all these it is possible to have, and not be a poet; they are

mere materials, which the poet shares in common with other people. What constitutes the poet is not the imagery nor the thoughts, nor even the feelings, but the law according to which they are called up. He is a poet, not because he has ideas of any particular kind, but because the succession of his ideas is subordinate to the course of his emotions.

Many who have never acknowledged this in theory, bear testimony to it in their particular judgments. In listening to an oration, or reading a written discourse not professedly poetical, when do we begin to feel that the speaker or author is putting off the character of the orator or the prose writer, and is passing into the poet? Not when he begins to show strong feeling; *then* we merely say, he seems to feel what he says; still less when he expresses himself in imagery; *then*, unless illustration be manifestly his sole object, we are apt to say, This is affectation. It is when the feeling (instead of passing away, or, if it continue, letting the train of thoughts run on exactly as they would have done if there were no influence at work but the mere intellect) becomes itself the originator of another train of association, which expels, or blends, with the former; as when (to take a simple example) the ideas or objects generally, of which the person has occasion to speak for the purposes of his discourse, are spoken of in words which we spontaneously use only when in a state of excitement, and which prove that the mind is at least as much occupied by a passive state of its own feelings, as by the desire of attaining the premeditated end which the discourse has in view.¹

¹ And this, we may remark by the way, seems to point to the true theory of poetic diction; and to suggest the true answer to as much as is erroneous of Mr. Wordsworth's celebrated doctrine on that subject. For on the one hand, *all* language which is the natural expression of feeling, is really poetical, and will always be

Our judgments of authors who lay actual claim to the title of poets, follow the same principle. We believe that whenever, after a writer's meaning is fully understood, it is still matter of reasoning and discussion whether he is a poet or not, he will be found to be wanting in the characteristic peculiarity of association which we have so often adverted to. When, on the contrary, after reading or hearing one or two passages, the mind instinctively and without hesitation cries out, This is a poet, the probability is, that the passages are strongly marked with this peculiar quality. And we may add that in such case, a critic who, not having sufficient feeling to respond to the poetry, is also without sufficient philosophy to understand it though he feel it not, will be apt to pronounce, not "this is prose," but this is "exaggeration," "this is mysticism," or, "this is nonsense."

Although a philosopher cannot, by culture, make himself, in the peculiar sense in which we now use the term, a poet, unless at least he have that peculiarity of nature which would probably have made poetry his earliest pursuit; a poet may always, by culture, make himself a philosopher. The poetic laws of association are by no means incompatible with the more ordinary laws; are by no means such as *must* have their course, even though a deliberate purpose require their suspension. If the peculiarities of the poetic temperament were uncontrollable in any poet, they might be supposed so in Shelley; yet how powerfully, in the Cenci, does he coerce and restrain all

felt as such, apart from conventional associations; but on the other, whenever intellectual culture has afforded a choice between several modes of expressing the same emotion, the stronger the feeling is, the more naturally and certainly will it prefer the language which is most peculiarly appropriated to itself, and kept sacred from the contact of all more vulgar and familiar objects of contemplation.

the characteristic qualities of his genius! what severe simplicity, in place of his usual barbaric splendour! how rigidly does he keep the feelings and the imagery in subordination to the thought!

The investigation of nature requires no habits or qualities of mind, but such as may always be acquired by industry and mental activity. Because in one state the mind may be so given up to a state of feeling, that the succession of its ideas is determined by the present enjoyment or suffering which pervades it, that is no reason but that in the calm retirement of study, when under no peculiar excitement either of the outward or of the inward sense, it may form any combinations, or pursue any trains of ideas, which are most conducive to the purposes of philosophic inquiry; and may, while in that state, form deliberate convictions, from which no excitement will afterwards make it swerve. Might we not go even further than this? We shall not pause to ask whether it be not a misunderstanding of the nature of passionate feeling to imagine that it is inconsistent with calmness, and whether they who so deem of it, do not confound the state of *desire* which unfortunately is possible to all, with the state of *fruition* which is granted only to the few. But without entering into this deeper investigation; that capacity of strong feeling, which is supposed necessarily to disturb the judgment, is also the material out of which all *motives* are made; the motives, consequently, which lead human beings to the pursuit of truth. The greater the individual's capability of happiness and of misery, the stronger interest has that individual in arriving at truth; and when once that interest is felt, an impassioned nature is sure to pursue this, as to pursue any other object, with greater ardour; for energy of character is always the offspring of strong feeling. If, therefore, the most impassioned natures do not ripen into the most powerful intellects, it is always

from defect of culture, or something wrong in the circumstances by which the being has originally or successively been surrounded. Undoubtedly strong feelings *require* a strong intellect to carry them, as more sail requires more ballast: and when, from neglect, or bad education, that strength is wanting, no wonder if the grandest and swiftest vessels make the most utter wreck.

Where, as in Milton, or to descend to our own times, in Coleridge, a poetic nature has been united with logical and scientific culture, the peculiarity of association arising from the finer nature so perpetually alternates with the associations attainable by commoner natures trained to high perfection, that its own particular law is not so conspicuously characteristic of the result produced, as in a poet like Shelley, to whom systematic intellectual culture, in a measure proportioned to the intensity of his own nature, has been wanting. Whether the superiority will naturally be on the side of the logician-poet or of the mere poet—whether the writings of the one ought, as a whole, to be truer, and their influence more beneficent, than those of the other—is too obvious in principle to need statement: it would be absurd to doubt whether two endowments are better than one; whether truth is more certainly arrived at by two processes, verifying and correcting each other, than by one alone. Unfortunately, in practice the matter is not quite so simple; there the question often is, which is least prejudicial to the intellect, uncultivation or malcultivation. For, as long as so much of education is made up of artificialities and conventionalisms, and the so-called training of the intellect—consists chiefly of the mere inculcation of traditional opinions, many of which, from the mere fact that the human intellect has not yet reached perfection, must necessarily be false; it is not always clear that the poet of acquired ideas has the advantage over him whose feeling has been his sole teacher. For, the depth

and durability of wrong as well as of right impressions, is proportional to the fineness of the material; and they who have the greatest capacity of natural feeling are generally those whose artificial feelings are the strongest. Hence, doubtless, among other reasons, it is, that in an age of revolutions in opinion, the cotemporary poets, those at least who deserve the name, those who have any individuality of character, if they are not before their age, are almost sure to be behind it. An observation curiously verified all over Europe in the present century. Nor let it be thought disparaging. However urgent may be the necessity for a breaking up of old modes of belief, the most strong-minded and discerning, next to those who head the movement, are generally those who bring up the rear of it. A text on which to dilate would lead us too far from the present subject.]

ANTIQUUS.¹

¹ This signature is only used to identify the authorship of the present article with that of a paper headed 'What is Poetry?' in a former number of the 'Repository.' The writer had a reason for the title when he first adopted it; but he has discarded it in his later articles, as giving a partial, and so far a false, notion of the spirit by which he would wish his thoughts and writings to be characterized. As Wordsworth says,

' *Past and future* are the wings
On whose support, harmoniously conjoined,
Moves the great spirit of human knowledge ;'

and though the present as often goes amiss for lack of what time and change have deprived us of, as of what they have yet to bring, a title which points only one way is unsuitable to a writer who attempts to look both ways. In future, when a signature is employed, it will be the single letter A. [Mill afterwards contributed articles to the "London Review" with the signature A. —ED.]

TENNYSON'S POEMS.

TENNYSON'S POEMS.¹

TOWARDS the close of 1830 appeared a small volume of poems, the work of an unknown author, and which, with considerable faults (some of them of a bad kind), gave evidence of powers such as had not for many years been displayed by any new aspirant to the character of a poet. This first publication was followed in due time by a second in which the faults of its predecessor were still visible, but were evidently on the point of disappearing; while the positive excellence was not only greater and more uniformly sustained, but of a higher order. The imagination of the poet and his reason had alike advanced: the one had become more teeming and vigorous, while its resources had been brought more habitually and completely under the command of the other.

The notice which these poems have hitherto received from the more widely-circulated and influential organs of criticism consists, so far as we are aware, of two articles—a review of the first publication, in “Blackwood’s Magazine,” and of the second in the “Quarterly Review.” The article in “Blackwood,” along with the usual flippancy and levity of that journal, evinced one of its better characteristics—a genuine appreciation and willing recognition of genius. It

¹ “London Review,” July, 1835.—

1. Poems chiefly Lyrical, by Alfred Tennyson. Effingham Wilson. 1830.

2. Poems, by Alfred Tennyson. Moxon. 1833.—ED.

was not to be expected that a writer in "Blackwood" could accomplish a criticism on a volume of poetry, without cutting capers and exhibiting himself in postures, as Drawcansir says, "because he dare." The article on Mr. Tennyson is throughout in a strain of mocking exaggeration.¹ Some reviewers write to extol their author, others to laugh at him; this writer was desirous to do both—first to make the book appear beyond measure contemptible, next in the highest degree admirable—putting the whole force of his mind alternately into these two purposes. If we can forgive this audacious sporting with his reader and his subjects, the critique is otherwise not without merit. The praise and blame, though shovelled out rather than measured, are thrown into the right places; the real merits and defects of the poems are pointed out with discrimination, and a fair enough impression left of the proportion between the two; and it is evident that if the same writer were to review Mr. Tennyson's second publication, his praise, instead of being about equally balanced by his censure, would be but slightly qualified by it.

Of Mr. Tennyson's two volumes, the second was the only one which fell into the hands of the "Quarterly Reviewer;" and his treatment of it, compared with the notice taken by "Blackwood" of its more juvenile predecessor, forms a contrast characteristic of the two journals. Whatever may be in other respects our opinion of "Blackwood's Magazine," it is impossible to deny to its principal writers (or writer) a certain susceptibility of sense, a geniality of temperament. Their mode of writing about works of genius is that of a person who derives much enjoyment from them, and is grateful for them. Genuine powers of mind, with whatever opinions connected, seldom fail to meet with response and recognition from these writers.

¹ The article was by "Christopher North" (Professor John Wilson).—ED.

The "Quarterly Review," on the other hand, both under its original and under its present management, has been characterised by qualities directly the reverse of these. Every new claim upon its admiration, unless forced upon it by the public voice, or recommended by some party interest, it welcomes, not with a friendly extension of the hand, but with a curl of the lip: the critic (as we figure him to ourselves) taking up the book, in trusting anticipation of pleasure, not from the book, but from the contemplation of his own cleverness in making it contemptible.¹ He has not missed the opportunity of admiring himself at the expense of Mr. Tennyson: although, as we have not heard that these poems have yet, like those of Mr. Robert Montgomery,² reached the eleventh edition, nor that any apprehension is entertained of danger to the public taste from their extravagant popularity, we may well be astonished that performances so utterly worthless, as the critic considers them, should have appeared to him deserving of so much attention from so superior a mind. The plan he adopts is no new one, but abundantly hackneyed: he selects the few bad passages (not amounting to three pages in the whole), and such others as, by being separated from the context, may be made to look ridiculous; and in a strain of dull irony, of which all the point consists in the ill-nature, he holds forth these as a specimen of the work. A piece of criticism resembling, in all but their wit, the disgraceful articles in the early

¹ The "Quarterly" article was no doubt by Lockhart, editor of the "Review" at this time. The "original and present management" of the "Review" alluded to by Mill was that of Gifford and Lockhart, the first and third editors. J. T. Coleridge was for a short time editor between these two.—ED.

² The author of "The Omnipresence of the Deity," whose book, published in 1828, reached twelve editions in as many months. His "Satan" was afterwards very much cut up by Macaulay in the "Edinburgh Review."—ED.

numbers of the "Edinburgh Review" on Wordsworth and Coleridge.

Meanwhile, these poems have been winning their way, by slow approaches, to a reputation, the exact limits and measure of which it would be hazardous at present to predict, but which, we believe, will not ultimately be inconsiderable. Desiring, so far as may depend upon us, to accelerate this progress, and also not without a desire to exhibit, to any who still have faith in the "Quarterly Review," the value of its critical judgments, we propose to lay before those of our readers who are still unacquainted with the poems, such specimens as may justify the terms in which we have spoken of them—interspersing or subjoining a few remarks on the character and the present state of the development of Mr. Tennyson's poetic endowment.

Of all the capacities of a poet, that which seems to have arisen earliest in Mr. Tennyson, and in which he most excels, is that of scene-painting, in the higher sense of the term: not the mere power of producing that rather vapid species of composition usually termed descriptive poetry—for there is not in these volumes one passage of pure description; but the power of creating scenery, in keeping with some state of human feeling; so fitted to it as to be the embodied symbol of it, and to summon up the state of feeling itself, with a force not to be surpassed by anything but reality. Our first specimen, selected from the earlier of the two volumes, will illustrate chiefly this quality of Mr. Tennyson's productions. We do not anticipate that this little poem will be equally relished at first by all lovers of poetry: and, indeed, if it were, its merit could be but of the humblest kind; for sentiments and imagery which can be received at once, and with equal ease, into every mind, must necessarily be trite. Nevertheless, we do not hesitate to quote it at full length. The subject is Mariana, the

Mariana of "Measure for Measure," living deserted and in solitude in the "moated grange." The ideas which these two words suggest, impregnated with the feelings of the supposed inhabitant, have given rise to the following picture :

"With blackest moss the flower-pots
Were thickly crusted, one and all,
The rusted nails fell from the knots
That held the peach to the garden-wall.
The broken sheds looked sad and strange,
Unlifted was the clinking latch,
Weeded and worn the ancient thatch
Upon the lonely moated grange.
She only said, 'My life is dreary,
He cometh not,' she said ;
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead !'

"Her tears fell with the dews at even,
Her tears fell ere the dews were dried,
She could not look on the sweet heaven,
Either at morn or eventide.
After the flitting of the bats,
When thickest dark did trance the sky,
She drew her casement-curtain by,
And glanced athwart the glooming flats.
She only said, 'The night is dreary,
He cometh not,' she said :
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead !'

"Upon the middle of the night,
Waking she heard the night-fowl crow :
The cock sung out an hour ere light :
From the dark fen the oxen's low
Came to her : without hope of change,
In sleep she seem'd to walk forlorn,
Till cold winds woke the grey-eyed morn
About the lonely moated grange.

She only said, 'The day is dreary,
He cometh not,' she said ;
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead !'

"About a stone-cast from the wall
A sluice with blackened waters slept,
And o'er it many, round and small,
The clustered marish-mosses crept.
Hard by a poplar shook alway
All silver-green with gnarled bark,
For leagues no other tree did mark
The level waste, the rounding grey.
She only said, 'My life is dreary,
He cometh not,' she said ;
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead !'

"And ever when the moon was low,
And the shrill winds were up an' away,
In the white curtain, to and fro,
She saw the gusty shadow sway.
But when the moon was very low,
And wild winds bound within their cell,
The shadow of the poplar fell
Upon her bed, across her brow.
She only said, 'The night is dreary,
He cometh not,' she said ;
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead !'

"All day within the dreamy house,
The doors upon their hinges creaked ;
The blue-fly sung i' the pane ; the mouse
Behind the mouldering wainscot shrieked,
Or from the crevice peer'd about.
Old faces glimmer'd thro' the doors,
Old footsteps trod the upper floors,
Old voices called her from without.
She only said, 'My life is dreary,
He cometh not,' she said ;
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead !'

“The sparrow’s chirrup on the roof,
The slow clock ticking, and the sound
Which to the wooing wind aloof
The poplar made, did all confound
Her sense ; but most she loathed the hour
When the thick moted sunbeam lay
Athwart the chambers, and the day
Downsloped was westering in his bower.
Then, said she, ‘ I am very dreary,
He will not come,’ she said ;
She wept, ‘ I am weary, weary,
Oh God, that I were dead ! ’ ”

In the one peculiar and rare quality which we intended to illustrate by it, this poem appears to us to be pre-eminent. We do not, indeed, defend all the expressions in it, some of which seem to have been extorted from the author by the tyranny of rhyme ; and we might find much more to say against the poem, if we insisted upon judging it by a wrong standard. The nominal subject excites anticipations which the poem does not even attempt to fulfil. The humblest poet who is a poet at all, could make more than is here made of the situation of a maiden abandoned by her lover. But that was not Mr. Tennyson’s idea. The love-story is secondary in his mind. The words, “ he cometh not,” are almost the only words which allude to it at all. To place ourselves at the right point of view, we must drop the conception of Shakespeare’s Mariana, and retain only that of a “ moated grange,” and a solitary dweller within it, forgotten by mankind. And now see whether poetic imagery ever conveyed a more intense conception of such a place, or of the feeling of such an inmate. From the very first line, the rust of age and the solitude of desertion are on the whole picture. Words surely never excited a more vivid feeling of physical and spiritual dreariness : and not dreariness alone—for that might be felt under many other circumstances of

solitude—but the dreariness which speaks not merely of being far from human converse and sympathy, but of being *deserted* by it.

Our next specimen shall be of a character remote from this. It is the second of two poems, “The May Queen” and “New Year’s Eve”—the one expressing the wild, overflowing spirits of a light-hearted girl, just chosen Queen of the May; the latter the feelings of the same girl some months afterwards, when dying by a gradual decay. We regret that the opening of the latter poem must lose in our pages the effect of contrast produced by its immediately succeeding the former:

“If you’re waking call me early, call me early, mother dear,
For I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year.
It is the last New-year that I shall ever see,
Then you may lay me low i’ the mould and think no more o’ me.

“To-night I saw the sun set: he set and left behind
The good old year, the dear old time, and all my peace of mind;
And the New-year’s coming up, mother, but I shall never see
The may upon the blackthorn, the leaf upon the tree.

“Last May we made a crown of flowers: we had a merry day;
Beneath the hawthorn on the green they made me Queen of May;
And we danced about the may-pole and in the hazel-copse,
Till Charles’s Wain came out above the tall white chimney-tops.

“There’s not a flower on all the hills: the frost is on the pane:
I only wish to live till the snowdrops come again:
I wish the snow would melt and the sun come out on high—
I long to see a flower so before the day I die.

“The building rook will caw from the windy tall elm-tree,
And the tufted plover pipe along the fallow lea,
And the swallow will come back again with summer o’er the wave,
But I shall lie alone, mother, within the mouldering grave.

“Upon the chancel-casement, and upon that grave of mine,
In the early early morning the summer sun will shine,
Before the red cock crows from the farm upon the hill,
When you are warm-asleep, mother, and all the world is still.

“ When the flowers come again, mother, beneath the waning light
You’ll never see me more in the long gray fields at night ;
When from the dry dark wold the summer airs blow cool
On the oat-grass and the sword-grass, and the bulrush in the pool.

“ Ye’ll bury me, my mother, just beneath the hawthorn shade,
And ye’ll come sometimes and see me where I am lowly laid.
I shall not forget ye, mother, I shall hear ye when ye pass,
With your feet above my head in the long and pleasant grass.

“ I have been wild and wayward, but ye’ll forgive me now ;
Ye’ll kiss me, my own mother, upon my cheek and brow ;
Nay, nay, ye must not weep, nor let your grief be wild,
You should not fret for me, mother, you have another child.

“ If I can I’ll come again, mother, from out my resting-place ;
Tho’ ye’ll not see me, mother, I shall look upon your face ;
Though I cannot speak a word, I shall hearken what you say,
And be often—often with ye when you think I’m far away.

“ Goodnight, goodnight, when I have said goodnight for evermore,
And ye see me carried out from the threshold of the door ;
Don’t let Effie come to see me till my grave be growing green :
She’ll be a better child to you than ever I have been.

“ She’ll find my garden-tools upon the granary floor :
Let her take ’em : they are hers : I shall never garden more :
But tell her, when I’m gone, to train the rose-bush that I set
About the parlour-window and the box of mignonette.

“ Good-night, sweet mother : call me when it begins to dawn.
All night I lie awake, but I fall asleep at morn ;
But I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year,
So, if you’re waking, call me, call me early, mother dear.”

This poem is fitted for a more extensive popularity than any other in the two volumes. Simple, genuine pathos, arising out of the situations and feelings common to mankind generally, is, of all poetic beauty, that which can be most universally appreciated ; and the genius implied in it is, in consequence, apt to be overrated, for it is also of all kinds that which can be most easily

produced. In this poem there is not only the truest pathos, but (except in one passage)¹ perfect harmony and keeping.

The next poem which we shall quote is one of higher pretensions. Its length exceeds the usual dimensions of an extract. But the idea which would be given of the more perfect of Mr. Tennyson's poems, by detached passages, would be not merely an incomplete but a false idea. There is not a stanza in the following poem which can be felt or even understood as the poet intended, unless the reader's imagination and feelings are already in the state which results from the passage next preceding, or rather from all which precedes. The very breaks, which divide the story into parts, all tell.

If every one approached poetry in the spirit in which it ought to be approached, willing to feel it first and examine it afterwards, we should not premise another word. But there is a class of readers (a class, too, on whose verdict the early success of a young poet mainly depends), who dare not enjoy until they have felt satisfied themselves that they have a warrant for enjoying; who read a poem with the critical understanding first, and only when they are convinced that it is right to be delighted, are willing to give their spontaneous feelings fair play. The consequence is that they lose the general effect, while they higggle about the details, and never place themselves in the position in which, even with their mere understandings, they can estimate the poem as a whole. For the benefit of such readers, we tell them beforehand, that this is a tale of enchantment, and that they will never enter into the spirit of it unless they surrender their imagination to the guidance of the poet, with the same easy credulity with which they

¹ We allude to the second line of the second stanza. The concluding words of the line appear to us altogether out of keeping with the rest of the poem.

would read the "Arabian Nights," or what this story more resembles, the tales of magic of the Middle Ages.

Though the agency is supernatural, the scenery, as will be perceived, belongs to the actual world. No reader of any imagination will complain, that the precise nature of the enchantment is left in mystery. J

THE LEGEND OF THE LADY OF SHALOTT.

PART THE FIRST.

"On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And thro' the field the road runs by
 To many-tower'd Camelot.
The yellow leaved waterlily,
The green-sheathed daffodilly,
Tremble in the water chilly,
 Round about Shalott.

"Willows whiten, aspens shiver,
The sunbeam-showers break and quiver
In the stream that runneth ever
By the island in the river
 Flowing down to Camelot.
Four grey walls, and four grey towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
 The Lady of Shalott.

"Underneath the bearded barley,
The reaper, reaping late and early,
Hears ever chanting cheerly,
Like an angel, singing clearly,
 O'er the stream of Camelot.
Piling the sheaves in furrows airy,
Beneath the moon, the reaper weary
Listening whispers, 'Tis the fairy
 Lady of Shalott.'

"The little isle is all inrailed
With a rose-fence, and over-trailed

With roses : by the marge unhailed
 The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
 Skimming down to Camelot :
 A pearl garland winds her head :
 She leaneth on a velvet bed,
 Full royally apparrellèd,
 The Lady of Shalott.

PART THE SECOND.

“ No time has she to sport and play :
 There she weaves by night and day
 A charmed web she weaves alway,
 A curse is on her if she stay
 Her weaving either night or day,
 To look down to Camelot.
 She knows not what the curse may be,
 Therefore she weaveth steadily,
 Therefore no other care hath she,
 The Lady of Shalott.

“ She lives with little joy or fear.
 Over the water, running near,
 The sheepbell tinkles in her ear,
 Before her hangs a mirror clear,
 Reflecting toward Camelot.
 And, as the mazy web she whirls,
 She sees the surly village-churls,
 And the red-cloaks of market girls,
 Pass onward from Shalott.

“ Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
 An abbot on an ambling pad,
 Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
 Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
 Goes by to towered Camelot.
 And sometimes thro' the mirror blue
 The knights come riding two and two :
 She hath no loyal knight and true,
 The Lady of Shalott.

“ But in her web she still delights
 To weave the mirror's magic sights,

For often thro' the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights,
And music, came from Camelot.
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately, wed :
' I am half-sick of shadows,' said
The Lady of Shalott.

PART THE THIRD.

" A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves :
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
Of bold Sir Launcelot.
A red-cross knight for ever kneeled
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
Beside remote Shalott.

" The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden galaxy.
The bridle-bells rang merrily
As he rode down from Camelot.
And, from his blazoned baldric slung,
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And, as he rode, his armour rung,
Beside remote Shalott.

" All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewelled shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet, and the helmet-feather
Burned like one burning flame together,
As he rode down from Camelot.
As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over green Shalott.

" His broad clear brow in sunlight glowed.
On burnished hooves his war-horse trode.

From underneath his helmet flow'd
 His coal-black curls as on he rode,
 As he rode down from Camelot.
 From the bank, and from the river,
 He flashed into the crystal mirror,
 'Tirra lirra, tirra lirra,'
 Sang Sir Launcelot.¹

"She left the web : she left the loom :
 She made three paces thro' the room :
 She saw the waterflower bloom :
 She saw the helmet and the plume :
 She looked down to Camelot.
 Out flew the web and floated wide,
 The mirror cracked from side to side,
 'The curse is come upon me,' cried
 The Lady of Shalott.

PART THE FOURTH.

"In the stormy east-wind straining,
 The pale-yellow woods were waning,
 The broad stream in his banks complaining,
 Heavily the low sky raining
 Over tower'd Camelot :
 Outside the isle a shallow boat
 Beneath a willow lay afloat,
 Below the carven stern she wrote,
 The Lady of Shalott.

"A cloudwhite crown of pearl she dight.
 All raimented in snowy white
 That loosely flew, (her zone in sight,
 Clasped with one blinding diamond bright,)
 Her wide eyes fixed on Camelot,

¹ In this most striking passage, which we should have thought would have commanded admiration from everyone who can read, all that the "Quarterly" reviewer could see is, that the rhymes are incorrect !

Though the squally east wind keenly
 Blew, with folded arms serenely
 By the waters stood the queenly
 Lady of Shalott.

“ With a steady stony glance—
 Like some bold seër in a trance,
 Beholding all his own mischance,
 Mute, with a glassy countenance
 She looked down to Camelot.
 It was the closing of the day
 She loosed the chain, and down she lay,
 The broad stream bore her far away,
 The Lady of Shalott.

“ As when to sailors when they roam,
 By creeks and out-falls far from home,
 Rising and dropping with the foam,
 From dying swans wild warblings come,
 Blown shoreward ; so to Camelot :
 Still as the boat-head wound along,
 The willowy hills and fields among,
 They heard her chanting her death-song,
 The Lady of Shalott.

“ A long-drawn carol, mournful, holy,
 She chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
 Till her eyes were darkened wholly,
 And her smooth face sharpened slowly ¹
 Turned to towered Camelot :
 For ere she reached upon the tide
 The first house by the water-side,
 Singing in her song she died,
 The Lady of Shalott.

“ Under tower and balcony,
 By garden-wall and gallery,

¹ This exquisite line the egregious critic of the “ Quarterly ” distinguishes by italics as specially absurd ! proving thereby what is his test of the truth of a description, even of a physical fact. He ✓ does not ask himself, Is the fact so ? but, Have I ever seen the expression in the verses of any former poet of celebrity ?

A pale, pale corpse she floated by,
 Dead-cold between the houses high,
 Dead into towered Camelot.
 Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
 To the plankèd wharfage came,
 Below the stern they read her name,
 *The Lady of Shalott.*¹

[In powers of narrative and scene-painting combined, this poem must be ranked among the very first of its class. The delineation of outward objects, as in the greater number of Mr. Tennyson's poems, is, not picturesque, but (if we may use the term) statuesque; with brilliancy of colour superadded. The forms are not as in painting, of unequal degrees of definiteness; the tints do not melt gradually into each other, but each individual object stands out in bold relief, with a clear decided outline. This statue-like precision and distinctness few artists have been able to give to so essentially vague a language as that of words: but if once this difficulty be got over, scene-painting by words has a wider range than either painting or sculpture; for it can represent (as the reader must have seen in the foregoing poem), not only with the vividness and strength of the one, but with the clearness and definiteness of the other, objects in motion. Along with all this there is in the poem all that power of making a few touches do the whole work, which excites our admiration in Coleridge. Every line suggests so much more than it says, that much may be left unsaid: the concentration, which is the soul of narrative, is obtained without the sacrifice of reality and life. Where the march of the story requires that the mind shall pause, details are specified; where rapidity is necessary, they are all brought before us at a flash. Except that the versification is less exquisite, the "Lady of Shalott" is entitled to a place by the side of "The Ancient Mariner" and "Christabel."

¹ We omit the remaining stanza, which seems to us a "lame and impotent conclusion," where no conclusion was required.

Mr. Tennyson's two volumes contain a whole picture gallery of lovely women. The imagery of the following passage from the poem of "Isabel," in the first volumes, is beautifully typical of the nobler and gentler of two beings, upholding, purifying, and, as far as possible, assimilating to itself the grosser and ruder :

"A clear stream flowing with a muddy one,
Till in its onward current it absorbs
 With swifter movement and in purer light
 The vexed eddies of its wayward brother—
A leaning and upbearing parasite,
Clothing the stem, which else had fallen quite,
With clustered flowerbells and ambrosial orbs
 Of rich fruit bunches leaning on each other."

We venture upon a long extract from what we consider the finest of these ideal portraits, the "Eleänore." The reader must not, in this case, look for the definiteness of the "Lady of Shalott;" there is nothing statuesque here. The object to be represented being more vague, there is greater vagueness and dimness in the expression. The loveliness of a graceful woman, words cannot make us see, but only feel. The individual expressions in the poem, from which the following is an extract, may not always bear a minute analysis; but ought they to be subjected to it? They are mere colours in a picture; nothing in themselves, but everything as they conduce to the general result.

"How may full-sailed verse express,
 How may measured words adore
 The full-flowing harmony
Of thy swan-like stateliness,
 Eleänore?
 The luxuriant symmetry
Of thy floating gracefulness,
 Eleänore?"

Every turn and glance of thine,
 Every lineament divine,
 Eleänore,
 And the steady sunset glow,
 That stays upon thee ? For in thee
 Is nothing sudden, nothing single ;
 Like two streams of incense free
 From one censer, in one shrine,
 Thought and motion mingle,
 Mingle ever. Motions flow
 To one another, even as tho'
 They were modulated so
 To an unheard melody,
 Which lives about thee, and a sweep
 Of richest pauses, evermore
 Drawn from each other mellow-deep—
 Who may express thee, Eleänore ?
 “ I stand before thee, Eleänore ;
 I see thy beauty gradually unfold,
 Daily and hourly, more and more.
 I muse, as in a trance, the while
 Slowly, as from a cloud of gold,
 Comes out thy deep ambrosial smile.
 I muse, as in a trance, whene'er
 The languors of thy love-deep eyes
 Float on to me. I would I were
 So tranced, so rapt in ecstacies,
 To stand apart, and to adore,
 Gazing on thee for evermore,
 Serene, imperial Eleänore ! ”

* * * * *

It has for some time been the fashion, though a fashion now happily on the decline, to consider a poet as a poet, only so far as he is supposed capable of delineating the more violent passions ; meaning by violent passions, states of excitement approaching to monomania, and characters predisposed to such states. The poem which follows will show how powerfully, without the slightest straining, by a few touches which do not seem to cost him an effort, Mr. Tennyson can depict such a state and such a character.

THE SISTERS.

"We were two daughters of one race :

She was the fairest in the face :

The wind is blowing in turret an' tree.

They were together, and she fell ;

Therefore revenge became me well.

O the Earl was fair to see !

"She died : she went to burning flame :

She mixed her ancient blood with shame.

The wind is howling in turret an' tree.

Whole weeks and months, and early and late,

To win his love I lay in wait :

O the Earl was fair to see !

"I made a feast ; I bad him come :

I won his love, I brought him home.

The wind is roaring in turret an' tree.

And after supper, on a bed,

Upon my lap he laid his head :

O the Earl was fair to see !

"I kiss'd his eyelids into rest :

His ruddy cheek upon my breast.

The wind is raging in turret an' tree.

I hated him with the hate of hell,

But I loved his beauty passing well.

O the Earl was fair to see !

"I rose up in the silent night :

I made my dagger sharp and bright.

The wind is raving in turret an' tree.

As half-asleep his breath he drew,

Three times I stabb'd him thro' and thro'.

O the Earl was fair to see !

"I curl'd and comb'd his comely head,

He looked so grand when he was dead.

The wind is blowing in turret an' tree.
 I wrapped his body in the sheet,
 And laid him at his mother's feet.
 O the Earl was fair to see ! ”

The second publication contains several classical subjects treated with more or less felicity. The story of the Judgment of Paris, recited by CEnone, his deserted love, is introduced in the following stately manner :

“ There is a dale in Ida, lovelier
 Than any in old Ionia, beautiful
 With emerald slopes of sunny sward, that lean
 Above the loud glenriver, which hath worn
 A path through steepdown granite walls below,
 Mantled with flowering tendriltwine. In front
 The cedar-shadowy valleys open wide.
 Far-seen, high over all the Godbuilt wall
 And many a snowy-columned range divine,
 Mounted with awful sculptures—men and Gods,
 The work of Gods—bright on the dark blue sky
 The windy citadel of Ilion
 Shone, like the crown of Troas. Hither came
 Mournful CEnone, wandering forlorn
 Of Paris, once her playmate. Round her neck,
 Her neck all marble-white and marble-cold,
 Floated her hair or seemed to float in rest ;
 She, leaning on a vine-entwinèd stone,
 Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-shadow
 Sloped downward to her seat from the upper cliff.”¹

¹ The small critic of the “Quarterly” finds fault with the frequent repetition, in CEnone’s recital, of the following two verses :

“ O mother Ida, many fountained Ida,
 Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.”

To return continually to the same *refrain* is, as the reader must have observed, even in our extracts, a frequent practice of Mr. Tennyson, and one which, though occasionally productive of great beauty, he carries to a faulty excess. But on this occasion, if ever,

The length to which our quotations have extended, and the unsatisfactoriness of short extracts, prevent us from giving any specimen of one of the finest of Mr. Tennyson's poems, the "Lotos Eaters." The subject is familiar to every reader of the "Odyssey." The poem is not of such sustained merit in the execution as some of the others; but the general impression resembles an effect of climate in a landscape: we see the objects through a drowsy, relaxing, but dreamy atmosphere, and the inhabitants seem to have inhaled the like. Two lines near the commencement touch the keynote of the poem:

"In the afternoon they came unto a land
Wherein it seemèd always afternoon."

The above extracts by no means afford an idea of all the variety of beauty to be found in these volumes. But the specimens we have given may, we hope, satisfy the reader, that if he explore further for himself, his search will be rewarded. We shall only subjoin a few remarks tending to an estimation of Mr. Tennyson's general character as a writer and as a poet.

There are in the character of every true poet two elements, for one of which he is indebted to nature, for the other to cultivation. What he derives from nature is fine senses: a nervous organization, not only adapted to make his outward impressions vivid and distinct (in which, however, practice does even more than nature), but so constituted, as to be, more easily than common organizations, thrown, either by physical or moral causes, into it was allowable. A subject from Greek poetry surely justifies imitation of the Greek poets. Repetitions similar to this are, as everybody knows, universal among the pastoral and elegiac poets of Greece, and their Roman imitators; and this poem is both pastoral and elegiac.

states of enjoyment or suffering, especially of enjoyment : states of a certain duration, often lasting long after the removal of the cause which produced them ; and not local, nor consciously physical, but, in so far as organic, pervading the entire nervous system. This peculiar kind of nervous susceptibility seems to be the distinctive character of the poetic temperament. It constitutes the capacity for poetry ; and not only produces, as has been shown from the known laws of the human mind, a predisposition to the poetic associations, but supplies the very materials out of which many of them are formed.¹ What the poet will afterwards construct out of these materials, or whether he will construct anything of value to any one but himself, depends upon the direction given, either by accident or design, to his habitual associations. Here, therefore, begins the province of culture ; and from this point upwards we may lay it down as a principle that the achievements of any poet in his art will be in proportion to the growth and perfection of his thinking faculty.

Every great poet, every poet who has extensively or permanently influenced mankind, has been a great thinker ; —has had a philosophy though perhaps he did not call it by that name ; —has had his mind full of thoughts derived not merely from passive sensibility, but from trains of reflection, from observation, analysis, and generalization ; however remote the sphere of his observation and meditation may have lain from the studies of the schools. Where the poetic temperament exists in its greatest degree, while the systematic culture of the intellect has been neglected,

¹ It may be thought, perhaps, that among the gifts of nature to a poet, ought also to be included a vivid and exuberant imagination. We believe, however, that vividness of imagination is no further a gift of nature than in so far that it is a natural consequence of vivid sensations. All besides this we are inclined to think depends on habit and cultivation.

we may expect to find, what we do find in the best poems of Shelley—vivid representations of states of passive and dreamy emotion, fitted to give extreme pleasure to persons of similar organization to the poet, but not likely to be sympathized in, because not understood, by any other persons; and scarcely conducing at all to the noblest end of poetry as an intellectual pursuit, that of acting upon the desires and characters of mankind through their emotions, to raise them towards the perfection of their nature. This, like every other adaptation of means to ends, is the work of cultivated reason; and the poet's success in it will be in proportion to the intrinsic value of his thoughts, and to the command which he has acquired over the materials of his imagination, for placing those thoughts in a strong light before the intellect, and impressing them on the feelings.

The poems which we have quoted from Mr. Tennyson⁷ prove incontestably that he possesses, in an eminent degree, the natural endowment of a poet—the poetic temperament. And it appears clearly not only from a comparison of the two volumes, but of different poems in the same volume, that, with him, the other element of poetic excellence—intellectual culture—is advancing both steadily and rapidly; that he is not destined like so many others, to be remembered for what he might have done, rather than for what he did; that he will not remain a poet of mere temperament, but is ripening into a true artist. Mr. Tennyson may not be conscious of the wide difference in maturity of intellect, which is apparent in his various poems. Though he now writes from greater fulness and clearness of thought, it by no means follows that he has learnt to detect the absence of those qualities in some of his earlier effusions. Indeed, he himself in one of the most beautiful poems of his first volume (though, as a work of art, very imperfect), the “Ode to Memory,” confesses

a parental predilection for the "first born" of his genius. But to us it is evident, not only that his second volume differs from his first as early manhood from youth, but that the various poems of the first volume belong to different, and even distant stages of intellectual development;—distant, not perhaps in years—for a mind like Mr. Tennyson's advances rapidly—but corresponding to very different states of the intellectual powers, both in respect of their strength and of their proportions.

From the very first, like all writers of his natural gifts, he luxuriates in sensuous¹ imagery; his nominal subject sometimes lies buried in a heap of it. From the first, too, we see his intellect, with every successive degree of strength, struggling upwards to shape this sensuous imagery to a spiritual meaning; ² to bring the materials which sense supplies, and fancy summons up, under the command of a central and controlling thought or feeling. We have seen by the poem of "Mariana" with what success he could occasionally do this, even in the period which answers to his first volume; but that volume contains various instances in which he has attempted the same thing and failed. Such, for example, are, in our opinion, the opening poem "Claribel," and the verses headed "Elegiacs." In both

¹ *Sensuous*, a word revived by Coleridge, as he himself states, "from our elder classics." It is used by Milton, who in his little tract on Education, says of poetry, as compared with rhetoric, that it is less subtle and fine, but more simple, *sensuous*, and passionate. The word *sensual* is irretrievably diverted to another meaning; and a term seems to be required, which (without exciting any ethical associations) shall denote all things pertaining to the bodily senses, in contradistinction to things pertaining to the intellect and the mental feelings. To this use the word *sensuous* seems as well adapted as any other which could be chosen.

² We conceive ourselves warranted, both by usage and the necessity of the case, in using the word *spiritual* as the converse of *sensuous*. It is scarcely necessary to say that we do not mean *religious*.

there is what is commonly called imagination—namely, fancy: the imagery and the melody actually haunt us; but there is no harmonizing principle in either;—no appropriateness to the spiritual elements of the scene. If the one poem had been called “A Solitary Place in a Wood,” and the other “An Evening Landscape,” they would not have lost, but gained. In another poem in the same volume, called “A Dirge,” and intended for a person who, when alive, had suffered from calumny—a subject which a poet of maturer powers would have made so much of, Mr. Tennyson merely glances at the topics of thought and emotion which his subject suggested, and expatiates in the mere scenery about the grave.¹

¹ There are instances in the volume of far worse failures than these. Such are the two poems “The Merman” and “The Mermaid.” When a poet attempts to represent to us any of the beings either of religious or of popular mythology, we expect from him, that under the conditions prescribed by the received notion of those beings, some mode of spiritual existence will be figured which we shall recognize as in harmony with the general laws of spirit, but exhibiting those laws in action among a new set of elements. The faculty of thus bringing home to us a coherent conception of beings unknown to our experience, not by logically *characterizing* them, but by a living *representation* of them, such as they would, in fact, *be*, if the hypothesis of their possibility could be realized—is what is meant, when anything is meant, by the words creative imagination. Mr. Tennyson not only fails in this, but makes nothing even of the sensuous elements of the scene: he does not even produce, what he in no other instance misses, a suitable representation of outward scenery. He is actually puerile.

Of the two productions (the most juvenile, we should think, of the set), “An English War Song” and “National Song,” we can only say, that unless they are meant for bitter ridicule of vulgar nationality, and of the poverty of intellect which usually accompanies it, their appearance here is unaccountable. The sonnet, “Buonaparte,” in the second volume, though not so childish in manner, has still something of the same spirit which was manifested in the two just cited (if they are to be taken as serious).

Some of the smaller poems have a fault which in any but a very juvenile production would be the worse fault of all: they are altogether without meaning: none, at least, that can be discerned in them by persons otherwise competent judges of poetry; if the author had any meaning, he has not been able to express it. Such, for instance are the two songs on the Owl; such, also, are the verses headed "The How and the Why," in the first volume, and the lines on "To-day and Yesterday," in the second. In the former of these productions Mr. Tennyson aimed at shadowing forth the vague aspirations to a knowledge beyond the reach of man—the yearnings for a solution of all questions, soluble or insoluble, which concern our nature and destiny—the impatience under the insufficiency of the human faculties to penetrate the secret of our being here, and being what we are—which are natural in a certain state of the human mind; if this was what he sought to typify, he has only proved that he knows not the feeling—that he has neither experienced it, nor realized it in imagination. The questions which a Faust calls upon earth and heaven, and all powers supernal and infernal, to resolve for him, are not the ridiculous ones which Mr. Tennyson asks himself in these verses.

But enough of faults which the poet has almost entirely thrown off merely by the natural expansion of his intellect. We have alluded to them chiefly to show how rapidly progressive that intellect has been.¹ There are traces, we

¹ With the trifling exceptions already mentioned the only pieces in the second volume which we could have wished omitted are, the little piece of childishness beginning "O darling room," and the verses to Christopher North, which express, in rather a commonplace way, the author's resentment of a critique, which merited no resentment from him, but rather (all things considered) a directly contrary feeling.

One or two poems of greater pretensions than the above may be considered, not indeed as absolute, but as comparative failures.

think, of a continuance of the same progression throughout the second as well as the first volume.

In the art of painting a picture to the inward eye, the improvement is not so conspicuous as in other qualities; so high a degree of excellence having been already attained in the first volume. Besides the poems which we have quoted, we may refer, in that volume, to those entitled, "Recollections of the Arabian Nights," "The Dying Swan," "The Kraken," "The Sleeping Beauty," the beautiful poems (songs they are called, but are not), "In the glooming light," and "A spirit haunts the year's last hours," are (like the "Mariana") not mere pictures, but states of emotion, embodied in sensuous imagery. From these, however, to the command over the materials of outward sense for the purpose of bodying forth states of feeling, evinced by some of the poems in the second volume, especially "The Lady of Shalott" and "The Lotos Eaters," there is a considerable distance; and Mr. Tennyson seems, as he proceeded to have raised his aims still higher, to have aspired to render his poems not only vivid representations of spiritual states, but symbolical of spiritual truths. His longest poem, "The Palace of Art," is an attempt of this sort. As such we do not think it wholly successful, though rich in beauties of detail; but we deem it of the most favourable augury for Mr. Tennyson's future achievements, since it proves a continually increasing endeavour towards the highest excellence, and a constantly rising standard of it.

We predict, that as Mr. Tennyson advances in general spiritual culture, these higher aims will become more and more predominant in his writings, that he will strive more

Among these we must place the second poem in the volume (which affords to the "Quarterly" critic the opportunities for almost his only just criticisms); and even, notwithstanding its fine sonorous opening, the "Hesperides."

and more diligently, and, even without striving, will be more and more impelled by the natural tendencies of an expanding character, towards what has been described as the highest object of poetry, "to incorporate the everlasting reason of man in forms visible to his sense, and suitable to it." For the fulfilment of this exalted purpose, what we have already seen of him authorizes us to foretell with confidence that powers of execution will not fail him; it rests with himself to see that his powers of thought may keep pace with them. To render his poetic endowment the means of giving impressiveness to important truths, he must by continual study and meditation strengthen his intellect for the discrimination of such truths; he must see that his theory of life and the world be no chimera of the brain, but the well-grounded result of solid and mature thinking;—he must cultivate, and with no half-devotion, philosophy as well as poetry.

It may not be superfluous to add, that he should guard himself against an error, to which the philosophical speculations of poets are peculiarly liable—that of embracing as truth, not the conclusions which are recommended by the strongest evidence, but those which have the most poetical appearance;—not those which arise from the deductions of impartial reason, but those which are most captivating to an imagination, biased perhaps by education and conventional associations. That whatever philosophy he adopts will leave ample materials for poetry, he may be well assured. Whatever is comprehensive, whatever is commanding, whatever is on a great scale, is poetical. Let our philosophical system be what it may, human feelings exist: human nature, with all its enjoyments and sufferings, its strugglings, its victories and defeats, still remain to us; and these are the materials of all poetry. Whoever, in the greatest concerns of human life, pursues truth with unbiased feelings, and an intellect adequate to discern it, will not find that the resources of

poetry are lost to him because he has learnt to use and not to abuse them. They are as open to him as they are to the sentimental weakling, who has no test of the true but the ornamental. And when he once has them under his command, he can wield them for purposes, and with a power, of which neither the dilettante nor the visionary have the slightest conception. ✓

We will not conclude without reminding Mr. Tennyson that if he wishes his poems to live he has still much to do in order to perfect himself in the merely mechanical parts of his craft. In a prose-writer great beauties bespeak forgiveness for innumerable negligences; but poems, especially short poems, attain permanent fame only by the most finished perfection in the details. In some of the most beautiful of Mr. Tennyson's production there are awkwardnesses and feeblenesses of expression, occasionally even absurdities, to be corrected; and which generally might be corrected without impairing a single beauty. His powers of versification are not yet of the highest order. In one great secret of his art, the adaptation of the music of his verse to the character of his subject, he is far from being a master: he often seems to take his metres almost at random. But this is little to set in the balance against so much excellence; and needed not have been mentioned, except to indicate to Mr. Tennyson the points on which some of his warmest admirers see most room and most necessity for further effort on his part, if he would secure to himself the high place in our poetic literature for which so many of the qualifications are already his own.

A.

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.¹

THIS is not so much a history, as an epic poem ; and notwithstanding, or even in consequence of this, the truest of histories. It is the history of the French Revolution, and the poetry of it, both in one ; and on the whole no work of greater genius, either historical or poetical, has been produced in this country for many years.

It is a book on which opinion will be for some time divided ; nay, what talk there is about it, while it is still fresh, will probably be oftenest of a disparaging sort ; as indeed is usually the case, both with men's works and

¹ "The French Revolution : A History. In three volumes. By Thomas Carlyle. Small 8vo, Fraser, 1837." [This review appeared in the "London and Westminster Review" of July, 1837. It is now reprinted for the first time ; Mill himself says of the article ("Autobiography," 1873, p. 217): "I believe that the early success and reputation of Carlyle's 'French Revolution' were considerably accelerated by what I wrote about it in the Review. Immediately on its publication, and before the commonplace critics, all whose rules and modes of judgment it set at defiance, had time to preoccupy the public with their disapproval of it, I wrote and published a review of the book, hailing it as one of those productions of genius which are above all rules, and are a law to themselves." Further on he says that he did not ascribe the impression he thought was produced by what he wrote "to any particular merit of execution : indeed," continues he, "I do not think the execution was good." He adds that he was gratified at the "success" of his "attempt to do immediate service" to a deserving work.—ED.]

with men themselves, of distinguished originality. For a thing which is unaccustomed, must be a very small thing indeed, if mankind can at once see into it and be sure that it is good: when, therefore, a considerable thing, which is also an unaccustomed one, appears, those who will hereafter approve, sit silent for a time, making up their minds; and those only to whom the mere novelty is a sufficient reason for disapproval, speak out. We need not fear to prophesy that the suffrages of a large class of the very best qualified judges will be given, even enthusiastically, in favour of the volumes before us; but we will not affect to deny that the sentiment of another large class of readers (among whom are many entitled to the most respectful attention on other subjects) will be far different; a class comprehending all who are repelled by quaintness of manner. For a style more peculiar than that of Mr. Carlyle, more unlike the jog-trot characterless uniformity which distinguishes the English style of this age of Periodicals, does not exist. Nor indeed can this style be wholly defended even by its admirers. Some of its peculiarities are mere mannerisms, arising from some casual association of ideas, or some habit accidentally picked up; and what is worse, many sterling thoughts are so disguised in phraseology borrowed from the spiritualist school of German poets and metaphysicians, as not only to obscure the meaning, but to raise, in the minds of most English readers, a not unnatural nor inexcusable presumption of there being no meaning at all. Nevertheless, the presumption fails in this instance (as in many other instances); there is not only a meaning, but generally a true, and even a profound meaning; and, although a few dicta about the "mystery" and the "infinitude" which are in the universe and in man, and such like topics, are repeated in varied phrases greatly too often for our taste, this must be borne with, proceeding, as one cannot but

see, from feelings the most solemn, and the most deeply rooted which can lie in the heart of a human being. These transcendentalisms, and the accidental mannerisms excepted, we pronounce the style of this book to be not only good, but of surpassing excellence; excelled, in its kind, only by the great masters of epic poetry; and a most suitable and glorious vesture for a work which is itself, as we have said, an epic poem.¹

To anyone who is perfectly satisfied with the best of the existing histories, it will be difficult to explain wherein the merit of Mr. Carlyle's book consists. If there be a person who, in reading the histories of Hume, Robertson, and Gibbon (works of extraordinary talent, and the works of great writers) has never felt that this, after all, is not history—and that the lives and deeds of his fellow-creatures must be placed before him in quite another manner, if he is to know them, or feel them to be real beings, who once were alive, beings of his own flesh and blood, not mere shadows and dim abstractions; such a person, for whom plausible talk *about* a thing does as well as an image of the thing itself, feels no need of a book like Mr. Carlyle's; the want, which it is peculiarly fitted to supply, does not yet consciously exist in his mind. That such a want, however, is generally felt, may be inferred from the vast number of historical plays and historical

¹ Mill's first idea of Carlyle's writing was that it was "insane rhapsody." This was, he tells us, when he read Carlyle's essays on Goethe, etc., in the Edinburgh and Foreign Quarterly reviews, about 1829. In 1831, however, Carlyle indulged in a similar criticism of Mill, whom he supposed to be "a new mystic." This latter brought about a meeting, and a mutual better understanding between them. Mill then read "Sartor Resartus" (in "Fraser's Magazine") "with enthusiastic admiration and the keenest interest," and soon after Carlyle became a frequent contributor to his (Mill's) review, the "London and Westminster."—ED.

romances, which have been written for no other purpose than to satisfy it. Mr. Carlyle has been the first to shew that all which is done for history by the best historical play, by Schiller's *Wallenstein*, for example, or Vitet's *admirable trilogy*,¹ may be done in a strictly true narrative, in which every incident rests on irrefragable authority; may be done, by means merely of an apt selection and a judicious grouping of authentic facts.

It has been noted as a point which distinguishes Shakespeare from ordinary dramatists, that *their* characters are logical abstractions, his are human beings: that their kings are nothing but kings, their lovers nothing but lovers, their patriots, courtiers, villains, cowards, bullies, are each of them that, and that alone; while his are real men and women, who have these qualities, but have them in addition to their full share of all other qualities (not incompatible), which are incident to human nature. In Shakespeare, consequently, we feel we are in a world of realities; we are among such beings as really could exist, as do exist, or have existed, and as we can sympathize with; the faces we see around us are human faces, and not mere rudiments of such, or exaggerations of single features. This quality, so often pointed out as distinctive of Shakespeare's plays, distinguishes Mr. Carlyle's history. Never before did we take up a book calling itself by that name, a book treating of past times, and professing to be true, and find ourselves actually among human beings. We at once felt, that what had hitherto been to us mere abstractions, had become

¹ "Les Barricades;" "Les Etats de Blois;" and "La Mort de Henri III.," three prose plays or rather series of dramatic scenes, illustrative of the League and the period of the religious wars in France. A work scarcely heard of in this country, but which well deserves to be so. The author, like so many of the rising literary notabilities of France (from M. Guizot downwards), is now unhappily withdrawn from literature, by place-hunting, and *doctrinaire* politics.

realities; the "forms of things unknown," which we fancied we knew, but knew their names merely, were, for the first time, with most startling effect, "bodied forth" and "turned into shape." Other historians talk to us indeed of human beings; but what do they place before us? Not even stuffed figures of such, but rather their algebraical symbols; a few phrases, which present no image to the fancy, but by adding up the dictionary meanings of which, we may hunt out a few qualities, not enough to form even the merest outline of what the men *were*, or possibly *could* have been; furnishing little but a canvas, which, if we ourselves can paint, we may fill with almost any picture, and if we cannot, it will remain for ever blank.

Take, for example, Hume's history; certainly, in its own way, one of the most skilful specimens of narrative in modern literature, and with some pretensions also to philosophy. Does Hume throw his own mind into the mind of an Anglo-Saxon, or an Anglo-Norman? Does any reader feel, after having read Hume's history, that he can now picture to himself what human life was, among the Anglo-Saxons? how an Anglo-Saxon would have acted in any supposable case? what were his joys, his sorrows, his hopes and fears, his ideas and opinions on any of the great and small matters of human interest? Would not the sight, if it could be had, of a single table or pair of shoes made by an Anglo-Saxon, tell us, directly and by inference, more of his whole way of life, more of how men thought and acted among the Anglo-Saxons, than Hume, with all his narrative skill, has contrived to tell us from all his materials?

Or descending from the history of civilization, which in Hume's case may have been a subordinate object, to the history of political events: did anyone ever gain from Hume's history anything like a picture of what may

actually have been passing, in the minds, say, of Cavaliers or of Roundheads during the civil wars? Does anyone feel that Hume has made him figure to himself with any precision what manner of men these were; how far they were like ourselves, how far different; what things they loved and hated, and what sort of conception they had formed of the things they loved and hated? And what kind of a notion can be framed of a period of history, unless we begin with that as a preliminary? Hampden, and Strafford, and Vane, and Cromwell, do these, in Hume's pages, appear to us like beings who actually trod this earth, and spoke with a human voice, and stretched out human hands in fellowship with other human beings; or like the figures in a phantasmagoria, colourless, impalpable, gigantic, and in all varieties of attitude, but all resembling one another in being shadows? And suppose he had done his best to assist us in forming a conception of these leading characters: what would it have availed, unless he had placed us also in the atmosphere which they breathed? What wiser are we for looking out upon the world through Hampden's eyes, unless it be the same world which Hampden looked upon? and what help has Hume afforded us for this? Has he depicted to us, or to himself, what all the multitude of people were about, who surrounded Hampden; what the whole English nation were feeling, thinking, or doing? Does he shew us what impressions from without were coming to Hampden—what materials and what instruments were given him to work with? If not, we are well qualified, truly, from Hume's information, to erect ourselves into judges of any part of Hampden's conduct!

Another very celebrated historian, we mean Gibbon—not a man of mere science and analysis, like Hume, but with some (though not the truest or profoundest) artistic feeling of the picturesque, and from whom, therefore,

rather more might have been expected—has with much pains succeeded in producing a tolerably graphic picture of here and there a battle, a tumult, or an insurrection ; his book is full of movement and costume, and would make a series of very pretty ballets at the Opera-house, and the ballets would give us fully as distinct an idea of the Roman empire, and how it declined and fell, as the book does. If we want that, we must look for it anywhere but in Gibbon. One touch of M. Guizot removes a portion of the veil which hid from us the recesses of private life under the Roman empire, lets in a ray of light which penetrates as far even as the domestic hearth of a subject of Rome, and shews us the government at work making that desolate ; but no similar gleam of light from Gibbon's mind ever reaches the subject ; *human life, in the times he* ← *wrote about, is not what he concerned himself with.*

On the other hand, there are probably many among our readers who are acquainted (though it is not included in Coleridge's admirable translation) with that extraordinary piece of dramatic writing, termed "*Wallenstein's Camp.*" One of the greatest of dramatists, the historian of the Thirty Years' War, aspired to do, in a dramatic fiction, which even *his* genius had not enabled him to do in his history—to delineate the great characters, and, above all, to embody the general spirit of that period. This is done with such life and reality through ten acts, that the reader feels when it is over as if all the prominent personages in the play were people whom he had known from his childhood ; but the author did not trust to this alone : he prefixed to the ten acts, one introductory act, intended to exhibit, not the characters, but the element they moved in. It is there, in this preliminary piece, that Schiller really depicts the Thirty Years' War ; without that, even the other ten acts, splendid as they are, would not have sufficiently realized it to our conception, nor would the Wallensteins

and Piccolominis and Terzskys of that glorious tragedy have been themselves, comparatively speaking, intelligible.

What Schiller must have done, in his own mind, with respect to the age of Wallenstein, to enable him to frame that fictitious delineation of it, Mr. Carlyle, with a mind which looks still more penetratingly into the deeper meanings of things than Schiller's, has done with respect to the French Revolution. And he has communicated his picture of it with equal vividness; but he has done it by means of real, not fictitious incidents. And therefore is his book, as we said, at once the authentic History and the Poetry of the French Revolution.

It is indeed a favourite doctrine of Mr. Carlyle, and one which he has enforced with great strength of reason and eloquence in other places, that all poetry suitable to the present age must be of this kind: that poetry has not naturally anything to do with fiction, nor is fiction in these days even the most appropriate vehicle and vesture of it; that it should, and will, employ itself more and more, not in inventing unrealities, but in bringing out into ever greater distinctness and impressiveness the poetic aspect of realities. For what is it, in the fictitious subjects which poets usually treat, that makes those subjects poetical? Surely not the dry, mechanical *facts* which compose the story; but the *feelings*—the high and solemn, the tender or mournful, even the gay and mirthful contemplations, which the story, or the manner of relating it, awaken in our minds. But would not all these thoughts and feelings be far more vividly aroused if the facts were *believed*; if the men, and all that is ascribed to them, had actually *been*; if the whole were no play of imagination, but a truth? In every real fact, in which any of the great interests of human beings are implicated, there lie the materials of all poetry; there is, as Mr. Carlyle has said, the fifth act of a tragedy in every peasant's deathbed;

the life of every heroic character is a heroic poem, were but the man of genius found, who could so write it! Not falsification of the reality is wanted, not the representation of it as being anything which it is not; only a deeper understanding of what it is; the power to conceive, and to represent, not the mere outside surface and costume of the thing, nor yet the mere logical definition, and *caput mortuum* of it—but an image of the thing itself in the concrete, with all that is lovable or hateable or admirable or pitiable or sad or solemn or pathetic, in it, and in the things which are implied in it. That is, the thing must be presented as it can exist only in the mind of a great poet: of one gifted with the two essential elements of the poetic character—creative imagination, which, from a chaos of scattered hints and confused testimonies, can summon up the Thing to appear before it as a completed whole: and that depth and breadth of feeling which makes all the images that are called up appear arrayed in whatever, of all that belongs to them, is naturally most affecting and impressive to the human soul.

We do not envy the person who can read Mr. Carlyle's three volumes, and not recognize in him both these endowments in a most rare and remarkable degree. What is equally important to be said—he possesses in no less perfection that among the qualities necessary for his task, seemingly the most opposite to these, and in which the man of poetic imagination might be thought likeliest to be deficient; the quality of the historical day-drudge. A more pains-taking or accurate investigator of facts, and sifter of testimonies, never wielded the historical pen. We do not say this at random, but from a most extensive acquaintance with his materials,¹ with his subject, and with the mode in which it has been treated by others.

¹ Mill's studies in the French revolutionary period began with his visit to France, as a youth, about 1821, when he met M. Say, a

Thus endowed, and having a theme the most replete with every kind of human interest, epic, tragic, elegiac, even comic and farcical, which history affords, and so near to us withal, that the authentic details of it are still attainable; need it be said, that he has produced a work which deserves to be memorable? a work which, whatever may be its immediate reception, "will not willingly be let die;" whose reputation will be a growing reputation, its influence rapidly felt, for it will be read by the writers; and perhaps every historical work of any note, which shall hereafter be written in this country, will be different from what it would have been if this book were not.

The book commences with the last illness of Louis XV., which is introduced as follows:

"President Hénault, remarking on royal Surnames of Honour how difficult it often is to ascertain not only why, but even when, they were conferred, takes occasion in his sleek official way to make a philosophical reflection. 'The Surname of *Bien-aimé* (Well-beloved),' says he, 'which Louis XV. bears, will not leave posterity in the same doubt. This Prince, in the year 1744, while hastening from one end of his kingdom to the other, and suspending his conquests in Flanders that he might fly to the assistance of Alsace, was arrested at Metz by a malady which threatened to cut short his days. At the news of this, Paris, all in terror, seemed a city taken by storm: the churches resounded with supplications and groans; the prayers of priests and people were every moment interrupted by their sobs; and it

friend of his father, and a man of the later period of the Revolution. "I carried away," says Mill, "a strong and permanent interest in Continental Liberalism, of which I ever afterwards kept myself *au courant*" ("Autobiog.," pp. 60, 61). A result of this was, as Mr. Courtney says ("Life," p. 49), "a careful study of the French Revolution, and a design to write something on the subject. The literary harvest was not, however, reaped by Mill himself, but by Carlyle, into whose hands Mill seems to have placed a considerable mass of materials."—ED.

was from an interest so dear and tender that this Surname of *Bien-aimé* fashioned itself, a title higher still than all the rest which this great Prince has earned.’¹

“So stands it written; in lasting memorial of that year 1744. Thirty other years have come and gone; and ‘this great Prince’ again lies sick; but in how altered circumstances now! Churches resound not with excessive groanings; Paris is stoically calm: sobs interrupt no prayers, for indeed none are offered, except Priests’ Litanies, read or chanted at fixed money-rate per hour, which are not liable to interruption. The shepherd of the people has been carried home from Little Trianon, heavy of heart, and been put to bed in his own Château of Versailles: the flock knows it, and heeds it not. At most, in the immeasurable tide of French Speech (which ceases not day after day, and only ebbs towards the short hours of night), may this of the royal sickness emerge from time to time as an article of news. Bets are doubtless depending; nay some people ‘express themselves loudly in the streets.’² But for the rest, on green field and steeped city, the May sun shines out, the May evening fades; and men ply their useful or useless business as if no Louis lay in danger.”

The loathsome deathbed of the royal debauchee becomes, under Mr. Carlyle’s pencil, the central figure in an historical picture, including all France; bringing before us, as it were, visibly, all the spiritual and physical elements which there existed, and made up the sum of what might be termed the influences of the age. In this picture, and in that of the “Era of Hope” (as Mr. Carlyle calls the first years of Louis XVI.) there is much that we would gladly quote. But on the whole we think these introductory chapters the least interesting part of the book; less distinguished by their intrinsic merit, and more so by all the peculiarities of manner which either are really defects, or

¹ “Abrégé Chronologique de l’Histoire de France” (Paris, 1775), p. 701.

² “Mémoires de M. le Baron Besenval” (Paris, 1805), vol. ii., pp. 59-90.

appear so. These chapters will only have justice done them on a second reading: once familiarized with the author's characteristic turn of thought and expression, we find many passages full of meaning, which, to unprepared minds, would convey a very small portion, if any, of the sense which they are not only intended, but are in themselves admirably calculated to express: for the finest expression is not always that which is the most readily apprehended. The real character of the book, however, begins only to display itself when the properly narrative portion commences. This, however, is more or less the case with all histories, though seldom to so conspicuous an extent.

The stream of the narrative acquires its full speed about the hundred and sixty-fifth page, and the beginning of the fourth book. The introductory rapid sketch of what may be called the coming-on of the Revolution, is then ended, and we are arrived at the calling together of the States General. The fourth book, first chapter, opens as follows:

“The universal prayer, therefore, is to be fulfilled! Always in days of national perplexity, when wrong abounded and help was not, this remedy of States General was called for; by a Malesherbes, nay by a Fénélon: ¹ even Parlements calling for it were ‘escorted with blessings.’ And now behold it is vouchsafed us; States General shall verily be!

“To say, let States General be, was easy; to say in what manner they shall be, is not so easy. Since the year 1614, there have no States General met in France; all trace of them has vanished from the living habits of men. Their structure, powers, methods of procedure, which were never in any measure fixed, have now become wholly a vague Possibility. Clay which the potter may shape, this way or that:—say rather, the twenty-five millions of potters; for so many have now, more or less, a vote in it! How to shape the States General? There is a problem. Each Body-corporate, each privileged, each organized Class has

¹ Montgaillard, vol. i., p. 461.

secret hopes of its own in that matter; and also secret misgivings of its own,—for, behold, this monstrous twenty-million Class, hitherto the dumb sheep which these others had to agree about the manner of shearing, is now also arising with hopes! It has ceased or is ceasing to be dumb; it speaks through Pamphlets, or at least brays and growls behind them, in unison,—increasing wonderfully their volume of sound.

“As for the Parlement of Paris, it has at once declared for the ‘old form of 1614.’ Which form had this advantage, that the *Tiers Etat*, Third Estate, or Commons, figured there as a show mainly: whereby the Noblesse and Clergy had but to avoid quarrel between themselves, and decide unobstructed what *they* thought best. Such was the clearly declared opinion of the Paris Parlement. But, being met by a storm of mere hooting and howling from all men, such opinion was blown straightway to the winds; and the popularity of the Parlement along with it,—never to return. The Parlement’s part, we said above, was as good as played. Concerning which, however, there is this further to be noted: the proximity of dates. It was on the 22nd of September that the Parlement returned from ‘vacation’ or ‘exile in its estates;’ to be reinstalled amid boundless jubilee from all Paris. Precisely next day, it was that this same Parlement came to its ‘clearly declared opinion:’ and then on the morrow after that, you behold it ‘covered with outrages;’ its outer court, one vast sibilation, and the glory departed from it for evermore.¹ A popularity of twenty-four hours was, in those times, no uncommon allowance.

“On the other hand, how superfluous was that invitation of Loménie: the invitation to thinkers! Thinkers and unthinkers, by the million, are spontaneously at their post, doing what is in them. Clubs labour: *Société Publicole*; Breton Club; Enraged Club, *Club des Enragés*. Likewise dinner-parties in the Palais Royal; your Mirabeaus, Talleyrands dining there, in company with Chamforts, Morellets, with Duponts and hot Parlementeers, not without object! For a certain *Neckerean* lion’s-provider, whom one could name, assembles them there:²—or even their own private determination to have dinner does it. And then as to pamphlets—in figurative language, ‘it is a sheer snowing of

¹ Weber, vol. i., p. 347.

² Weber, vol. i., p. 360.

pamphlets; like to snow up the Government thoroughfares! Now is the time for friends of freedom; sane, and even insane.

"Count, or self-styled Count, d'Aintraignes, 'the young Languedocian gentleman,' with perhaps Chamfort the Cynic to help him, rises into furor almost Pythic; highest, where many are high.¹ Foolish young Languedocian gentleman; who himself so soon, 'emigrating among the foremost,' must fly indignant over the marches, with the *Contrat Social* in his pocket,—towards outer darkness, thankless intriguings, *ignis fatuus* hoverings, and death by the stiletto! Abbé Sièyes has left Chartres Cathedral, and canonry and book-shelves there; has let his tonsure grow, and come to Paris with a secular head, of the most irrefragable sort, to ask three questions, and answer them: *What is the Third Estate? All. What has it hitherto been in our form of government? Nothing. What does it want? To become something.*

"D'Orleans, for be sure he, on his way to Chaos, is in the thick of this,—promulgates his *Deliberations*; ² fathered by him, written by Laclos of the *Liaisons Dangereuses*. The result of which comes out simply: 'The Third Estate is the Nation.' On the other hand, Monseigneur d'Artois, with other Princes of the Blood, publishes, in solemn *Memorial* to the King, that, if such things be listened to, Privilege, Nobility, Monarchy, Church, State, and Strongbox are in danger.³ In danger truly: and yet if you do not listen, are they out of danger? It is the voice of all France, this sound that rises. Immeasurable, manifold; as the sound of outbreking waters: wise were he who knew what to do in it,—if not to fly to the mountains, and hide himself!

"How an ideal, all-seeing Versailles Government, sitting there on such principles, in such an environment, would have determined to demean itself at this new juncture; may even yet be a question. Such a Government had felt too well that its long task was now drawing to a close; that, under the guise of these States General, at length inevitable, a new omnipotent Unknown

¹ "Mémoire sur les Etats-Généraux." See Montgaillard, vol. i., pp. 457-9.

² "Délibérations à prendre pour les Assemblées des Bailliages."

³ "Mémoire présenté au Roi par Monseigneur Comte d'Artois, M. le Prince de Condé, M. le Duc de Bourbon, M. le Duc d'Enghien, et M. le Prince de Conti." (Given in "Hist. Parl.," vol. i., p. 256.)

of Democracy was coming into being ; in presence of which no Versailles Government either could or should, except in a provisory character, continue extant. To enact which provisory character, so unspeakably important, might its whole faculties but have sufficed ; and so a peaceable, gradual, well-conducted Abdication and *Domine-dimittas* have been the issue !

“ This for our ideal, all-seeing Versailles Government. But for the actual irrational Versailles Government ? Alas ! that is a Government existing there only for its own behoof : without right, except possession ; and now also without might. It foresees nothing, sees nothing ; has not so much as a purpose, but has only purposes,—and the instinct whereby all that exists will struggle to keep existing. Wholly a vortex : in which vain counsels, hallucinations, falsehoods, intrigues, and imbecilities whirl ; like withered rubbish in the meeting of winds ! The *Œil-de-Bœuf* has its irrational hopes, if also its fears. Since hitherto all States General have done as good as nothing, why should these do more ? The Commons indeed look dangerous ; but on the whole is not revolt, unknown now for five generations, an impossibility ? The Three Estates can, by management, be set against each other ; the Third will, as heretofore, join with the King ; will, out of mere spite and self-interest, be eager to tax and vex the other two. The other two are thus delivered bound into our hands, that we may fleece them likewise. Whereupon, money being got, and the Three Estates all in quarrel, dismiss them, and let the future go as it can ! As good Archbishop Loménie was wont to say : ‘ There are so many accidents ; and it needs but one to save us. ’—How many to destroy us ?

“ Poor Necker in the midst of such an anarchy does what is possible for him. He looks into it with obstinately hopeful face ; lauds the known rectitude of the kingly mind ; listens indulgent-like to the known perverseness of the queenly and courtly ;—emits if any proclamation or regulation, one favouring the *Tiers Etat* ; but settling nothing ; hovering afar off rather, and advising all things to settle themselves. * * * *

“ But so, at least, by Royal Edict of the 24th of January,¹ does it finally, to impatient expectant France, become not only

¹ “ *Réglement du Roi pour la Convocation des Etats-Généraux à Versailles* ” (reprinted, wrong dated, in “ *Histoire Parlementaire*,” vol. i., p. 262.

indubitable that national deputies *are* to meet, but possible (so far and hardly further has the royal regulation gone) to begin electing them."

The next Chapter is "The Election."

"Up then, and be doing! The royal signal-word flies through France, as through vast forests the rushing of a mighty wind. At Parish Churches, in Townhalls, and every House of Convocation; by Bailliages, by Seneschalsies, in whatsoever form men convene; there, with confusion enough, are primary assemblies forming. To elect your electors; such is the form prescribed: then to draw up your 'Writ of Complaints and Grievances' (*Cahier de plaintes et doléances*), of which latter there is no lack.

"With such virtue works this Royal January Edict; as it rolls rapidly, in its leathern mails, along these frost-bound highways, towards all the four winds. Like some *fiat*, or magic spell-word;—which such things do resemble! For always, as it sounds out 'at the market-cross,' accompanied with trumpet-blast; presided by Bailli, Seneschal, or other minor functionary, with beefeaters; or, in country churches, is droned forth after sermon '*au prône des messes paroissiales*;' and is registered, posted, and let fly over all the world,—you behold how this multitudinous French people, so long simmering and buzzing in eager expectancy, begins heaping and shaping itself into organic groups. Which organic groups, again, hold smaller organic grouplets: the inarticulate buzzing becomes articulate speaking and acting. By Primary Assembly, and then by Secondary; by 'successive elections,' and infinite elaboration and scrutiny, according to prescribed process,—shall the genuine 'Complaints and Grievances' be at length got to paper; shall the fit National Representative be at length laid hold of.

"How the whole People shakes itself, as if it had one life; and, in thousand-voiced humour, announces that it is awake, suddenly out of long death-sleep, and will thenceforth sleep no more! The long looked-for has come at last; wondrous news, of victory, deliverance, enfranchisement, sounds magical through every heart. To the proud strong man it has come; whose strong hands shall no more be gyved; to whom boundless unconquered continents lie disclosed. The weary day-drudge has heard of it; the beggar with

his crust moistened in tears. What! To us also has hope reached; down even to us? Hunger and hardship are not to be eternal? The bread we extorted from the rugged glebe, and, with the toil of our sinews, reaped and ground, and kneaded into loaves, was not wholly for another, then; but we also shall eat of it, and be filled? Glorious news (answer the prudent elders), but all too unlikely!—Thus, at any rate, may the lower people, who pay no money taxes and have no right to vote,¹ assiduously crowd round those that do; and most halls of assembly, within doors and without, seem animated enough.”

Has the reader often seen the state of an agitated nation made thus present, thus palpable? How the thing paints itself in all its greatness—the men in all their littleness! and this is not done by reasoning about them, but by showing them. The deep pathos of the last paragraph, grand as it is, is but an average specimen; as, indeed, is the whole passage. In the remaining two volumes and a half there are scarcely five consecutive pages of inferior merit to those we have quoted. The few extracts we can venture to make, will be selected, not for peculiarity of merit, but either as forming wholes in themselves, or as depicting events and situations, with which the reader, it may be hoped, is familiar.² For the more he previously

¹ “Réglement du Roi” (in “Histoire Parlementaire,” as above, vol. i., pp. 267-307).

² It may be hoped; scarcely, we fear, expected. For considering the extraordinary dramatic interest of the story of the Revolution, however imperfectly told, it is really surprising how little, to English readers, even the outline of the facts is known. Mr. Carlyle’s book is less fitted for those who know nothing about the subject, than for those who already know a little. We rejoice to see that a translation of *Thiers* is announced. As a mere piece of narrative, we know nothing in modern historical writing so nearly resembling the ancient models as *Thiers’ History*: we hope he has met with a translator who can do him justice. Whoever has read *Thiers* first, will be the better fitted both to enjoy and to understand *Carlyle*.

knew of the mere outline of the facts, the more he will admire the writer, whose pictorial and truly poetic genius enables him for the first time to fill up the outline. —

Our last extract was an abridged sketch of the State of a Nation: the next shall be a copious narrative of a single event: the far-famed Siege of the Bastille. How much every such passage must suffer by being torn from the context, needs scarcely be said; and nothing that could be said, could, in this case, make it adequately felt. The history of the two previous days occupies twenty-two pages, rising from page to page in interest. We begin at noon on the fourteenth of July:

“All morning, since nine, there has been a cry everywhere: To the Bastille! Repeated ‘deputations of citizens’ have been here, passionate for arms; whom de Launay has got dismissed by soft speeches through portholes. Towards noon, Elector Thuriot de la Rosière gains admittance; finds de Launay indisposed for surrender; nay disposed for blowing up the place rather. Thuriot mounts with him to the battlements; heaps of paving-stones, old iron and missiles lie piled; cannon all duly levelled; in every embrasure a cannon,—only drawn back a little! But outwards, behold, O Thuriot, how the multitude flows on, welling through every street; tocsin furiously pealing, all drums beating the *générale*; the Suburb Saint-Antoine rolling hitherward wholly, as one man! Such vision (spectral yet real) thou, O Thuriot, as from thy Mount of Vision, beholdest in this moment: prophetic of what other Phantasmagories, and loud-gibbering Spectral Realities, which thou yet beholdest not, but shalt! ‘*Que voulez-vous?*’ said de Launay, turning pale at the sight, with an air of reproach, almost of menace. ‘Monsieur,’ said Thuriot, rising into the moral-sublime, ‘What mean *you*? Consider if I could not precipitate *both* of us from this height,’—say only a hundred feet, exclusive of the walled ditch! Whereupon de Launay fell silent. Thuriot shews himself from some pinnacle, to comfort the multitude becoming suspicious, fumescent: then descends; departs with protest; with warning addressed also to the Invalides,—on whom, however, it produces but a mixed indistinct impression. The old heads are none of

the clearest ; besides, it is said, de Launay has been profuse of beverages (*prodigua des boissons*). They think, they will not fire,—if not fired on, if they can help it ; but must, on the whole, be ruled considerably by circumstances.

“Wo to thee, de Launay, in such an hour, if thou canst not, taking some one firm decision, *rule* circumstances ! Soft speeches will not serve ; hard grape-shot is questionable ; but hovering between the two is *unquestionable*. Ever wilder swells the tide of men ; their infinite hum waxing ever louder, into imprecations, perhaps into crackle of stray musketry,—which latter, on walls nine feet thick, cannot do execution. The outer drawbridge has been lowered for Thuriot ; new *deputation of citizens* (it is the third, and noisiest of all) penetrates that way into the outer court : soft speeches producing no clearance of these, de Launay gives fire ; pulls up his drawbridge. A slight sputter ;—which has *kindled* the too combustible chaos ; made it a roaring fire-chaos ! Bursts forth Insurrection, at sight of its own blood (for there were deaths by that sputter of fire), into endless rolling explosion of musketry, distraction, execration ;—and over head, from the fortress, let one great gun, with its grape-shot, go booming, to shew what we *could* do. The Bastille is besieged !

“On, then, all Frenchmen that have hearts in their bodies ! Roar with all your throats, of cartilage and metal, ye Sons of Liberty ; stir spasmodically whatsoever of utmost faculty is in you, soul, body or spirit ; for it is the hour ! Smite, thou Louis Tournay, cartwright of the Marais, old-soldier of the Regiment Dauphine ; smite at that outer drawbridge-chain, though the fiery hail whistles round thee ! Never, over nave or fellow, did thy axe strike such a stroke. Down with it, man ; down with it to Orcus : let the whole accursed Edifice sink thither, and Tyranny be swallowed up for ever ! Mounted, some say on the roof of the guard-room, some ‘on bayonets stuck into joints of the wall,’ Louis Tournay smites, brave Aubin Bonnemère (also an old soldier) seconding him : the chain yields, breaks ; the huge drawbridge slams down, thundering (*avec fracas*). Glorious : and yet, alas, it is still but the outworks. The Eight grim Towers, with their Invalides’ musketry, their paving-stones and cannon-mouths, still soar aloft intact ;—ditch yawning impassable, stone-faced ; the inner drawbridge with its *back* towards us : the Bastille is still to take !

“To describe this siege of the Bastille (thought to be one of the most important in History) perhaps transcends the talent of mortals. Could one but, after infinite reading, get to understand so much as the plan of the building ! But there is open Esplanade, at the end of the Rue Saint-Antoine ; there are such Forecourts, *Cour Avancé*, *Cour de l’Orme*, arched Gateway (where Louis Tournay now fights) ; then new drawbridges, dormant-bridges, rampart-bastions, and the grim Eight Towers : a labyrinthic mass, high-frowning there, of all ages from twenty years to four hundred and twenty ;—beleagured, in this its last hour, as we said, by mere Chaos come again ! Ordnance of all calibres ; throats of all capacities ; men of all plans, every man his own engineer : seldom since the war of Pygmies and Cranes was there seen so anomalous a thing. Half-pay Elie is home for a suit of regimentals ; no one would heed him in coloured clothes : half-pay Hulin is haranguing Gardes Françaises in the Place de Grève. Frantic patriots pick up the grape-shots ; bear them, still hot (or seemingly so), to the Hôtel-de-Ville :—Paris, you perceive, is to be burnt ! Flesselles is ‘pale to the very lips,’ for the roar of the multitude grows deep. Paris wholly has got to the acme of its frenzy ; whirled, all ways, by panic madness. At every street-barricade, there whirls simmering, a minor whirlpool,—strengthening the barricade, since God knows what is coming : and all minor whirlpools play distractedly into that grand Fire-Mahlstrom which is lashing round the Bastille.

“And so it lashes and it roars. Cholat the wine-merchant has become an impromptu cannoneer. See Georget, of the marine service, fresh from Brest, ply the King of Siam’s cannon. Singular (if we were not used to the like) : Georget lay, last night, taking his ease at his inn ; the King of Siam’s cannon also lay, knowing nothing of *him*, for a hundred years. Yet now, at the right instant, they have got together, and discourse eloquent music. For, hearing what was toward, Georget sprang from the Brest Diligence, and ran. Gardes Françaises also will be here, with real artillery : were not the walls so thick !—Upwards from the Esplanade, horizontally from all neighbouring roofs and windows, flashes one irregular deluge of musketry,—without effect. The Invalides lie flat, firing comparatively at their ease from behind stone ; hardly through portholes, shew the tip of a nose. We fall, shot ; and make no impression !

“Let conflagration rage; of whatsoever is combustible! Guard-rooms are burnt, Invalides’ mess-rooms. A distracted ‘Peruke-maker with two fiery torches’ is for burning ‘the salt-petres of the Arsenal;’—had not a woman run screaming; had not a Patriot, with some tincture of Natural Philosophy, instantly struck the wind out of him (butt of musket on pit of stomach), overturned barrels, and stayed the devouring element. A young beautiful lady, seized escaping in these Outer Courts, and thought falsely to be de Launay’s daughter, shall be burnt in de Launay’s sight; she lies swooned on a paillasse: but again a Patriot, it is brave Aubin Bonnemère the old soldier, dashes in, and rescues her. Straw is burnt; three cartloads of it, hauled thither, go up in white smoke: almost to the choking of Patriotism itself; so that Elie had, with singed brows, to drag back one cart; and Réole the ‘gigantic haberdasher’ another. Smoke as of Tophet; confusion as of Babel; noise as of the Crack of Doom!

“Blood flows; the aliment of new madness. The wounded are carried into houses of the Rue Cerisaie; the dying leave their last mandate not to yield till the accursed Stronghold fall. And yet, alas, how fall? The walls are so thick! Deputations, three in number, arrive from the Hôtel-de-Ville; Abbé Fauchet (who was one) can say, with what almost superhuman courage of benevolence.¹ These wave their Town-flag in the arched Gateway: and stand, rolling their drum; but to no purpose. In such Crack of Doom, de Launay cannot hear them, dare not believe them: they return, with justified rage, the whew of lead still singing in their ears. What to do? The Firemen are here, squirting with their fire-pumps on the Invalides’ cannon, to wet the touchholes; they unfortunately cannot squirt so high; but produce only clouds of spray. Individuals of classical knowledge propose *catapults*. Santerre, the sonorous brewer of the suburb Saint-Antoine, advises rather that the place be fired, by a ‘mixture of phosphorus and oil of turpentine spouted up through forcing pumps:’ O Spinola-Santerre, hast thou the mixture ready? Every man his own engineer! And still the fire-deluge abates not; even women are firing, and Turks; at least one woman (with her sweetheart), and one Turk.² Gardes Françaises

¹ Fauchet’s Narrative (“Deux Amis,” vol. i., p. 324).

² “Deux Amis” (vol. i., p. 319), Dusaulx, etc.

have come: real cannon, real cannoneers. Usher Maillard is busy; half-pay Elie, half-pay Hulin rage in the midst of thousands.

"How the great Bastille Clock ticks (inaudible) in its Inner Court there, at its ease, hour after hour; as if nothing special, for it or the world, were passing! It tolled One when the firing began; and is now pointing towards Five, and still the firing slakes not.—Far down, in their vaults, the seven Prisoners hear muffled din as of earthquakes; their Turnkeys answer vaguely.

"Wo to thee, de Launay, with thy poor hundred Invalides! Broglie is distant, and his ears heavy: Besenval hears, but can send no help. One poor troop of Hussars has crept, reconnoitring, cautiously along the quais, as far as the Pont Neuf. 'We are come to join you,' said the Captain; for the crowd seems shoreless. A large-headed dwarfish individual, of smoke-bleared aspect, shambles forward, opening his blue lips, for there is sense in him; and croaks: 'Alight, then, and give up your arms!' The Hussar-Captain is too happy to be escorted to the barriers, and dismissed on parole. Who the squat individual was? Men answer, It is M. Marat, author of the excellent pacific *Avis au Peuple*! Great truly, O thou remarkable Dogleech, is this thy day of emergence and new birth: and yet this same day come four years———But let the curtains of the Future hang.

"What shall de Launay do? One thing only de Launay could have done: what he said he would do. Fancy him sitting, from the first, with lighted taper, within arm's length of the powder-magazine; motionless, like old Roman Senator, or bronze Lamp-holder; coldly apprising Thuriot, and all men, by a slight motion of his eye, what his resolution was:—Harmless he sat there, while unharmed; but the King's fortress, meanwhile, could, might, would, or should, in nowise, be surrendered, save to the King's Messenger: one old man's life is worthless, so it be lost with honour; but think, ye brawling *canaille*, how will it be when a whole Bastille springs skyward!—In such statuesque, taper-holding attitude, one fancies de Launay might have left Thuriot, the red Clerks of the Bazoche, Curé of Saint-Stephen and all the tagrag-and-bobtail of the world, to work their will.

"And yet, withal, he could not do it. Hast thou considered how each man's heart is so tremulously responsive to the hearts of all men; hast thou noted how omnipotent is the very sound

of many men? How their shriek of indignation palsies the strong soul; their howl of contumely withers with unfelt pangs? The Ritter Glück confessed that the ground-tone of the noblest passage, in one of his noblest Operas, was the voice of the populace he had heard at Vienna, crying to their Kaiser: Bread! Bread! Great is the combined voice of men; the utterance of their *instincts*, which are truer than their *thoughts*: it is the greatest a man encounters, among the sounds and shadows, which make up this World of Time. He who can resist that, has his footing somewhere *beyond* time. De Launay could not do it. Distracted, he hovers between two; hopes in the middle of despair; surrenders not his fortress; declares that he will blow it up, seizes torches to blow it up, and does not blow it. Unhappy old de Launay, it is the death-agony of thy Bastille and thee! Jail, jailing and jailor, all three, such as they may have been, must finish.

“For four hours now has the World-bedlam roared: call it the World-Chimæra, blowing fire! The poor Invalides have sunk under their battlements, or rise only with reversed muskets: they have made a white flag of napkins; go beating the *chamade*, or seeming to beat, for one can hear nothing. The very Swiss at the Portecullis look weary of firing; disheartened in the fire-deluge: a porthole at the drawbridge is opened, as by one that would speak. See Huissier Maillard, the shifty man! On his plank, swinging over the abyss of that stone-ditch; plank resting on parapet, balanced by weight of patriots,—he hovers perilous: such a dove towards such an ark! Deftly, thou shifty Usher: one man already fell; and lies smashed, far down there, against the masonry! Usher Maillard falls not: deftly, unerring he walks, with outspread palm. The Swiss holds a paper through his porthole; the shifty Usher snatches it, and returns. Terms of surrender: Pardon, immunity to all! Are they accepted?—‘*Foi d’officier*, on the word of an officer,’ answers half-pay Hulin, —or half-pay Elie, for men do not agree on it, ‘they are!’ Sinks the drawbridge,—Usher Maillard bolting it when down; rushes in the living deluge: the Bastille is fallen! *Victoire! La Bastille est prise!*”¹.

¹ “Histoire de la Révolution,” par Deux Amis de la Liberté, vol. i., pp. 267-306. Besenval, vol. iii., pp. 410-434. Dusaulx:

We next quote the passage on the Burning of Châteaux. Mr. Carlyle gives rather a different account from what English people have been used to, of that feature of the Revolution :

“Starvation has been known among the French commonalty before this ; known and familiar. Did we not see them, in the year 1775, presenting, in sallow faces, in wretchedness and raggedness, their Petition of Grievances ; and, for answer, getting a brand-new gallows forty feet high ? Hunger and darkness, through long years ! For look back on that earlier Paris riot, when a great personage, worn out by debauchery, was believed to be in want of blood-baths ; and mothers, in worn raiment, yet with living hearts under it, ‘filled the public places’ with their wild Rachel-cries,—stilled also by the gallows. Twenty years ago, the Friend of Men (preaching to the deaf) described the Limousin peasants as wearing a pain-stricken (*souffredouleur*) look, a look *past* complaint, ‘as if the oppression of the great were like the hail and the thunder, a thing irremediable, the ordinance of nature.’¹ And now, if in some great hour, the shock of a falling Bastille should awaken you ; and it were found to be the ordinance of art merely ; and remediable, reversible !

“Or has the reader forgotten that ‘flood of savages,’ which, in sight of the same Friend of Men, descended from the mountains at Mont d’Or ? Lank-haired haggard faces ; shapes rawboned, in high sabots ; in woollen jupes, with leather girdles studded with copper-nails ! They rocked from foot to foot, and beat time with their elbows too, as the quarrel and battle which was not long in beginning went on ; shouting fiercely ; the lank faces distorted into the similitude of a cruel laugh. For they were darkened and hardened : long had they been the prey of excise-men and tax-men ; of ‘clerks with the cold spurt of their pen.’ It was the fixed prophecy of our old Marquis, which no man would listen to, that ‘such Government by Blind-man’s-buff, stumbling along too far, would end by the General Overturn, the *Calbute Générale* !’

“Prise de la Bastille,” pp. 291-301. Bailly : “Mémoires” (Collection de Berville et Barrière), vol. i., pp. 322 *et seq.*

¹ Fils Adoptif : “Mémoires de Mirabeau,” vol. i., pp. 364-394.

“No man would listen, each went his thoughtless way ;—and Time and Destiny also travelled on. The Government by Blind-man’s-buff, stumbling along, has reached the precipice inevitable for it. Dull Drudgery, driven on, by clerks with the cold dastard spurt of their pen, has been driven—into a Communion of Drudges ! For now, moreover, there have come the strangest confused tidings ; by Paris Journals with their paper wings ; or still more portentous, where no Journals are,¹ by rumour and conjecture : Oppression *not* inevitable ; a Bastille prostrate, and the Constitution fast getting ready ! Which Constitution, if it be something and not nothing, what can it be but bread to eat ?

“The traveller, ‘walking up hill bridle in hand,’ overtakes ‘a poor woman ;’ the image as such commonly are, of drudgery and scarcity ; ‘looking sixty years of age, though she is not yet twenty-eight.’ They have seven children, her poor drudge and she : a farm, with one cow, which helps to make the children soup ; also one little horse, or garron. They have rents and quit-rents, Hens to pay to this Seigneur, Oat-sacks to that ; King’s taxes, Statute-labour, Church-taxes, taxes enough ;—and think the times inexpressible. She has heard that *somewhere*, in some manner, *something* is to be done for the poor : ‘God send it soon ; for the dues and taxes crush us down (*nous écrasent*) !’²

“Fair prophecies are spoken, but they are not fulfilled. There have been Notables, Assemblages, turnings out and comings in. Intriguing and manœuvring ; parliamentary eloquence and arguing, Greek meeting Greek in high places, has long gone on ; yet still bread comes not. The harvest is reaped and garnered ; yet still we have no bread. Urged by despair and by hope, what can Drudgery do, but rise as predicted, and produce the General Overturn ?

“Fancy, then, some five full-grown millions of such gaunt figures, with their haggard faces (*figures hâres*) ; in woollen jupes, with copper-studded leather girths, and high sabots,—starting up to ask, as in forest-roarings, their washed Upper-Classes, after long unreviewed centuries, virtually this question : How have ye treated us ; how have ye taught us, fed us, and led

¹ See Arthur Young, vol. i., pp. 137-150, etc.

² *Ibid.*, p. 134.

us, while we toiled for you? The answer can be read in flames, over the nightly summer-sky. *This* is the feeding and leading we have had of you: EMPTINESS,—of pocket, of stomach, of head, and of heart. Behold there is *nothing in us*; nothing but what nature gives her wild children of the desert: Ferocity and Appetite; Strength grounded on Hunger. Did ye mark among your Rights of Man, that man was not to die of starvation, while there was bread reaped by him? It is among the *Mights of Man*.

“Seventy-two Châteaux have flamed aloft in the Maconnais and Beanjolais alone: this seems the centre of the conflagration; but it has spread over Dauphiné, Alsace, the Lyonnais; the whole south-east is in a blaze. All over the north, from Rouen to Metz, disorder is abroad: smugglers of salt go openly in in armed bands: the barriers of towns are burnt; toll-gatherers, tax-gatherers, official persons put to flight. ‘It was thought,’ says Young, ‘the people, from hunger, would revolt;’ and we see they have done it. Desperate Lackalls, long prowling aimless, now finding hope in desperation itself, everywhere form a nucleus. They ring the Church bell by way of tocsin: and the parish turns out to the work.¹ Ferocity, atrocity; hunger and revenge: such work as we can imagine!

“Ill stands it now with the Seigneur, who, for example, ‘has walled up the only Fountain of the Township;’ who has ridden high on his *chartier* and parchment: who has preserved Game not wisely but too well. Churches also, and Canonries, are sacked, without mercy; which have shorn the flock too close, forgetting to feed it. Wo to the land over which Sansculottism, in its day of vengeance, tramps roughshod,—shod in sabots! Highbred Seigneurs, with their delicate women and little ones, had to ‘fly half-naked,’ under cloud of night; glad to escape the flames, and even worse. You meet them at the *tables-d’hôte* of inns; making wise reflections or foolish that ‘rank is destroyed;’ uncertain whither they shall now wend.² The metayer will find it convenient to be slack in paying rent. As for the Tax-gatherer, he, long hunting as a biped of prey, may now get hunted as one; his Majesty’s Exchequer will not ‘fill up the Deficit,’ this season: it is the notion of many that a Patriot Majesty, being the Restorer of French Liberty, has abolished

¹ See “*Histoire Parlementaire*,” vol. ii., pp. 243-246.

² See Young, vol. i., pp. 149, etc.

most taxes, though, for their private ends, some men make a secret of it.

“Where this will end? In the Abyss, one may prophesy; whither all Delusions, are, at all moments, travelling; where this Delusion has now arrived. For if there be a Faith, from of old, it is this, as we often repeat, that no Lie can live for ever. The very Truth has to change its vesture, from time to time; and be born again. But all Lies have sentence of death written down against them, in Heaven’s Chancery itself; and, slowly or fast, advance incessantly towards their hour. ‘The sign of a Grand Seigneur being landlord,’ says the vehement plain-spoken Arthur Young, ‘are wastes, *landes*, deserts, ling: go to his residence, you will find it in the middle of a forest, peopled with deer, wild boars and wolves. The fields are scenes of pitiable management, as the houses are of misery. To see so many millions of hands, that would be industrious, all idle and starving: oh, if I were legislator of France, for one day, I would make these great lords skip again!’¹ O Arthur, thou now actually beholdest them *skip*;— wilt thou grow to grumble at that too?

“For long years and generations it lasted, but the time came. Featherbrain, whom no reasoning and no pleading could touch, the glare of the firebrand had to illuminate: there remained but that method. Consider it, look at it! The widow is gathering nettles for her children’s dinner; a perfumed Seigneur, delicately lounging in the *Ceil-de-Bœuf*, has an alchemy whereby he will extract from her the third nettle, and name it Rent and Law: such an arrangement must end. Ought it? But, O most fearful is *such* an ending! Let those, to whom God, in His great mercy, has granted time and space, prepare another and milder one.”

We shall now give a still more striking scene: the opening of the “Insurrection of Women.”

“If Voltaire once, in splenetic humour, asked his countrymen: ‘But you, *Gualches*, what have you invented?’ they can now answer: the Art of Insurrection. It was an art needed in these last singular times: an art, for which the French nature, so full of vehemence, so free from depth, was perhaps of all others the fittest.

“Accordingly, to what a height, one may well say of perfection,

¹ Arthur Young, vol. i., pp. 12, 48, 84, etc.

has this branch of human industry been carried by France, within the last half century ! Insurrection, which, Lafayette thought, might be 'the most sacred of duties,' ranks now, for the French people, among the duties which they can perform. Other mobs are dull masses ; which roll onwards with a dull fierce tenacity, a dull fierce heat, but emit no light-flashes of genius as they go. The French mob, again, is among the liveliest phenomena of our world. So rapid, audacious ; so clear-sighted, inventive, prompt to seize the moment ; instinct with life to its finger-ends ! That talent, were there no other, of spontaneously standing in queue, distinguishes, as we said, the French People from all Peoples, ancient and modern.

" Let the reader confess too that, taking one thing with another, perhaps few terrestrial Appearances are better worth considering than mobs. Your mob is a genuine outburst of Nature ; issuing from, or communicating with, the deepest deep of Nature. When so much goes grinning and grimacing as a lifeless Formality, and under the stiff buckram no heart can be felt beating, here once more, if nowhere else, is a Sincerity and Reality. Shudder at it ; or even shriek over it, if thou must ; nevertheless consider it. Such a Complex of human Forces and Individualities hurled forth, in their transcendental mood, to act and react, on circumstances and on one another ; to work out what it is in them to work. The thing they will do is known to no man ; least of all to themselves. It is the inflammablest immeasurable Fire-work, generating, consuming itself. With what phases, to what extent, with what results it will burn off, Philosophy and Perspicacity conjecture in vain.

" 'Man,' as has been written, 'is for ever interesting to man ; nay, properly there is nothing else interesting.' In which light also, may we not discern why most Battles have become so wearisome ? Battles, in these ages, are transacted by mechanism ; with the slightest possible development of human individuality or spontaneity : men now even die, and kill one another, in an artificial manner. Battles ever since Homer's time, when they were Fighting Mobs, have mostly ceased to be worth looking at, worth reading of, or remembering. How many wearisome bloody Battles does History strive to represent ; or even, in a husky way, to sing :—and she would omit or carelessly slur-over this one Insurrection of Women ?

“A thought, or dim raw-material of a thought, was fermenting all night, universally in the female head, and might explode. In squalid garret, on Monday morning, Maternity awakes, to hear children weeping for bread. Maternity must forth to the streets, to the herb-markets and Bakers'-queues; meets there with hunger-stricken Maternity, sympathetic, exasperative. O we unhappy women! But instead of Bakers'-queues, why not to Aristocrats' palaces, the root of the matter? *Allons!* Let us assemble. To the Hôtel-de-Ville; to Versailles; to the Lanterne!

“In one of the Guardhouses of the Quartier Saint-Eustache, ‘a young woman’ seizes a drum,—for how shall National Guards give fire on women, on a young woman? The young woman seizes the drum; sets forth, beating it, ‘uttering cries relative to the dearth of grains.’ Descend, O mothers; descend, ye Judiths, to food and revenge!—All women gather and go; crowds storm all stairs, force out all women: the female Insurrectionary Force, according to Camille, resembles the English Naval one; there is a universal ‘Press of women.’ Robust dames of the Halle, slim mantua-makers, assiduous, risen with the dawn; ancient Virginity tripping to matins; the Housemaid, with early broom; all must go. Rouse ye, O women; the laggard men will not act; they say, we ourselves may act!

“And so, like snowbreak from the mountains, for every staircase is a melted brook, it storms; tumultuous, wild-shrilling, towards the Hôtel-de-Ville. Tumultuous; with or without drum-music; for the Faubourg Saint-Antoine also has tucked up its gown; and, with besom-staves, fire-irons, and even rusty pistols (void of ammunition), is flowing on. Sound of it flies, with a velocity of sound, to the utmost Barriers. By seven o'clock, on this raw October morning, fifth of the month, the Townhall will see wonders. Nay, as chance would have it, a male party are already there; clustering tumultuously round some National Patrol, and a Baker who had been seized with short weights. They are there; and have even lowered the rope of the Lanterne. So that the official persons have to smuggle forth the short-weighting Baker by back doors, and even send ‘to all the Districts’ for more force.

“Grand it was, says Camille, to see so many Judiths, from eight to ten thousand of them in all, rushing out to search into

the root of the matter! Not unfrightful it must have been; ludicrous-terrific, and most unmanageable. At such hour the overwatched Three Hundred are not yet stirring: none but some Clerks, a company of National Guards; and M. de Gouvion, the Major-General. Gouvion has fought in America for the cause of civil Liberty; a man of no inconsiderable heart, but deficient in head. He is, for the moment, in his back apartment; assuaging Usher Maillard, the Bastille-serjeant, who has come, as too many do, with 'representations.' The assuagement is still incomplete when our Judiths arrive.

"The National Guards form on the outer stairs, with levelled bayonets; the ten thousand Judiths press up, resistless; with obtestations, with outspread hands,—merely to speak to the Mayor. The rear forces them; nay, from male hands in the rear, stones already fly: the National Guard must do one of two things; sweep the Place de Grève with cannon, or else open to right and left. They open; the living deluge rushes in. Through all rooms and cabinets, upwards to the topmost belfry: ravenous; seeking arms, seeking Mayors, seeking justice;—while, again, the better-dressed speak kindly to the Clerks; point out the misery of these poor women; also their ailments, some even of an interesting sort.¹

"Poor M. de Gouvion is shiftless in this extremity;—a man shiftless, perturbed; who will one day commit suicide. How happy for him that Usher Maillard, the shifty, was there, at the moment, though making representations! Fly back, thou shifty Maillard; seek the Bastille Company; and O return fast with it; above all, with thy own shifty head! For, behold, the Judiths can find no Mayor or Municipal; scarcely in the topmost belfry, can they find poor Abbé Lefevre the Powder-distributor. Him, for want of a better, they suspend there; in the pale morning light; over the top of all Paris, which swims in one's failing eyes:—a horrible end? Nay, the rope broke, as French ropes often did; or else an Amazon cut it. Abbé Lefevre falls, some twenty feet, rattling among the leads; and lives long years after, though always with 'a *tremblement* in the limbs.'²

"And now doors fly under hatchets: the Judiths have broken

¹ "Deux Amis," vol. iii., pp. 141-166.

² Dusaulx: "Prise de la Bastille" (Note, p. 281).

the Armoury ; have seized guns and cannons, three money-bags, paper-heaps ; torches flare : in few minutes, our brave Hôtel-de-Ville which dates from the Fourth Henry, will, with all that it holds, be in flames ! ”

Here opens a new chapter.

“ In flames, truly,—were it not that Usher Maillard, swift of foot, shifty of head, has returned !

“ Maillard, of his own motion, for Gouvion or the rest would not even sanction him,—snatches a drum ; descends the Porch-stairs, ran-tan, beating sharp, with loud rolls, his Rogues’ march : to Versailles ! *Allons ; à Versailles !* As men beat on kettle or warming-pan, when angry she-bees, or say, flying desperate wasps, are to be hived ; and the desperate insects hear it, and cluster round it,—simply as round a guidance, where there was none : so now these Menads round shifty Maillard, Riding-Usher of the Châtelet. The axe pauses uplifted ; Abbé Lefevre is left half-hanged ; from the belfry downwards all vomits itself. What rub-a-dub is that ? Stanislas Maillard, Bastille-hero, will lead us to Versailles ? Joy to thee, Maillard ; blessed art thou above Riding-Ushers ! Away then, away !

“ The seized cannon are yoked with seized cart-horses : brownlocked Démoiselle Théroigne, with pike and helmet, sits there as gunneress, ‘ with haughty eye and serene fair countenance : ’ comparable, some think, to the *Maid* of Orleans, or even recalling ‘ the idea of Pallas Athene.’² Maillard (for his drum still rolls) is, by heaven-rending acclamation, admitted General. Maillard hastens the languid march. Maillard, beating rhythmic, with sharp ran-tan, all along the Quais, leads forward, with difficulty, his Menadic host. Such a host—marched not in silence ! The bargeman pauses on the river ; all wagoners and coach-drivers fly ; men peer from windows,—not women, lest they be pressed. Sight of sights : Bacchantes, in these ultimate Formalized Ages ! Bronze Henri looks on, from his Pont Neuf ; the Monarchie Louvre, Medicean Tuileries see a day not theretofore seen.

“ And now Maillard has his Menads in the *Champs Elysées* (fields *Tartarean* rather) ; and the Hôtel-de-Ville has suffered

¹ “ Deux Amis,” vol. iii., p. 157.

comparatively nothing. Broken doors; an Abbé Lefevre, who shall never more distribute powder; three sacks of money, most part of which (for Sansculottism, though famishing, is not without honour) shall be returned :¹ this is all the damage. Great Maillard! A small nucleus of order is round his drum; but his outskirts fluctuate like the mad ocean: for rascality male and female is flowing in on him, from the four winds; guidance there is none but in his single head and two drumsticks.

"O Maillard, when, since war first was, had General of Force such a task before him, as thou this day? Walter the penniless still touches the feeling heart: but then Walter had sanction: had space to turn in; and also his crusaders were of the male sex. Thou, this day, disowned of Heaven and Earth, art General of Menads. Their inarticulate frenzy thou must, on the spur of the instant, render into articulate words, into actions that are not frantic. Fail in it, this way or that! Pragmatical Officiality, with its penalties and law-books, waits before thee; Menads storm behind. If such hewed off the melodious head of Orpheus, and hurled it into the Peneus waters, what may they not make of thee,—thee rhythmic merely, with no music but a sheepskin drum!—Maillard did not fail. Remarkable Maillard, if fame were not an accident, and history a distillation of rumour, how remarkable wert thou! * * * * *

"Scarcely was Maillard gone, when M. de Gouvion's message to all the Districts, and such tocsin and drumming of the *générale*, began to take effect. Armed National Guards from every District; especially the Grenadiers of the Centre, who are our Old Gardes Françaises, arrive in quick sequence, on the Place de Grève. An 'immense people' is there; Saint-Antoine, with pike and rusty firelock, is all crowding thither, be it welcome or unwelcome. The Centre Grenadiers are received with cheering: 'it is not cheers that we want,' answer they gloomily; 'the nation has been insulted; to arms, and come with us for orders!' Ha, sits the wind so? Patriotism and Patrollotism are now one!

"The Three Hundred have assembled; 'all the Committees are in activity;' Lafayette is dictating dispatches for Versailles, when a Deputation of the Centre Grenadiers introduces itself to

¹ "Histoire Parlementaire," vol. iii., p. 310.

him. The Deputation makes military obeisance; and thus speaks, not without a kind of thought in it: '*Mon Général*, we are deputed by the Six Companies of Grenadiers. We do not think you a traitor, but we think the Government betrays you; it is time that this end. We cannot turn our bayonets against women crying to us for bread. The people are miserable, the source of the mischief is at Versailles: we must go seek the King, and bring him to Paris. We must exterminate (*exterminer*) the *Regiment de Flandre* and the *Gardes-du-Corps*, who have dared to trample on the National Cockade. If the King be too weak to wear his crown, let him lay it down. You will crown his Son, you will name a Council of Regency; and all will go better.'¹ Reproachful astonishment paints itself on the face of Lafayette; speaks itself from his eloquent chivalrous lips: in vain. 'My General, we would shed the last drop of our blood for you; but the root of the mischief is at Versailles: we must go and bring the King to Paris; all the people wish it, *tout le peuple le veut*.'

"My General descends to the outer staircase; and harangues; once more in vain. 'To Versailles! To Versailles!' Mayor Bailly, sent for through floods of Sansculottism, attempts academic oratory from his gilt state-coach; realizes nothing but infinite hoarse cries of: 'Bread! To Versailles!'—and gladly shrinks within doors. Lafayette mounts the white charger; and again harangues, and reharangues: with eloquence, with firmness, indignant demonstration; with all things but persuasion. To Versailles! To Versailles!' So lasts it, hour after hour;—for the space of half a day.

"The great Scipio Americanus can do nothing; not so much as escape. '*Morbleu, mon Général*,' cry the Grenadiers, serrying their ranks as the white charger makes a motion that way. 'You will not leave us, you will abide with us!' A perilous juncture: Major Bailly and the Municipals sit quaking within doors; My General is prisoner without: the Place de Grève, with its thirty thousand Regulars, its whole irregular Saint-Antoine and Saint-Marceau, is one minatory mass of clear or rusty steel; all hearts set, with a moody fixedness, on one object. Moody, fixed are all hearts: tranquil is no heart,—if it be not that of the white

¹ "Deux Amis," vol. iii., p. 161.

charger, who paws there, with arched neck, composedly champing his bit; as if no World, with its Dynasties and Eras, were now rushing down. The drizzly day tends westward; the cry is still: 'To Versailles!'

"Nay now, borne from afar, come quite sinister cries; hoarse, reverberating in longdrawn hollow murmurs, with syllables too like those of *Lanterne*! Or else, irregular Sansculottism may be marching off, of itself; with pikes, nay with cannon. The inflexible Scipio does at length, by aide-de-camp, ask of the Municipals: Whether or not he may go? A Letter is handed out to him, over armed heads; sixty thousand faces flash fixedly on his, there is stillness and no bosom breathes, till he have read. By Heaven, he grows suddenly pale! Do the Municipals permit? 'Permit and even order,'—since he can no other. Clangour of approval rends the welkin. To your ranks, then; let us march!

"It is, as we compute, towards three in the afternoon. Indignant National Guards may dine for once from their haversack: dined or undined, they march with one heart. Paris flings up her windows, clap hands, as the Avengers, with their shrilling drums and shalms tramp by; she will then sit pensive, apprehensive, and pass rather a sleepless night.¹ On the white charger, Lafayette, in the slowest possible manner, going and coming, and eloquently haranguing among the ranks, rolls onward with his thirty thousand. Saint-Antoine, with pike and cannon, has preceded him; a mixed multitude, of all and of no arms, hovers on his flanks and skirts; the country once more pauses agape: *Paris marche sur nous*."

We cannot stop here. See the beginning of the next chapter.

"For indeed, about this same moment, Maillard has halted his draggled Menads on the last hill-top; and now Versailles, and the Château of Versailles, and far and wide the inheritance of Royalty opens to the wondering eye. From far on the right, over Marly and Saint-Germain-en-Lay; round towards Rambouillet, on the left: beautiful all; softly embosomed; as if in sadness, in the dim moist weather! And near before us is Ver-

¹ "Deux Amis," vol. iii., p. 165.

sailles, New and Old; with that broad frondent *Avenue de Versailles* between,—stately-frondent, broad, 300 feet as men reckon, with four rows of elms; and then the *Château de Versailles*, ending in royal Parks and Pleasances, gleaming lakelets, arbours, Labyrinths, the *Ménagerie*, and Great and Little Trianon. High-towered dwellings, leafy pleasant places; where the gods of this lower world abide: whence, nevertheless, black Care cannot be excluded; whither Menadic Hunger is even now advancing, armed with pike-thyrsi!

“Yes, yonder, Mesdames, where our straight frondent Avenue, joined, as you note, by Two frondent brother Avenues from this hand and from that, spreads out into Place Royale and Palace Forecourt; yonder is the *Salle des Menus*. Yonder an august Assembly sits regenerating France. Forecourt, Grand Court. Court of Marble, Court narrowing into Court you may discern next, or fancy: on the extreme verge of which that glass-dome, visibly glittering like a star of hope, is the—*Œil-de-Bœuf*! Yonder, or nowhere in the world, is bread baked for us. But, O Mesdames, were not one thing good: That our cannons, with Demoiselle Théroigne and all show of war, be put to the rear? Submission beseems petitioners of a National Assembly; we are strangers in Versailles,—whence, too audibly, there comes even now sound as of tocsin and *générale*! Also to put on, if possible, a cheerful countenance, hiding our sorrows; and even to sing? Sorrow, pitied of the Heavens, is hateful, suspicious to the Earth.—So counsels shifty Maillard; haranguing his Menads, on the heights near Versailles.

“Cunning Maillard’s dispositions are obeyed. The draggled Insurrectionists advance up the Avenue, ‘in three columns’ among the four Elm-rows; ‘singing *Henri Quatre*,’ with what melody they can; and shouting *Vive le Roi*. Versailles, though the elm-rows are dripping wet, crowds from both sides, with: ‘*Vivent nos Parisiennes*, our Paris ones for ever!’”

We skip twenty pages, and pass to a later part of the same incident.

“Deep sleep has fallen promiscuously on the high and on the low, suspending most things, even wrath and famine. Darkness covers the Earth. But, far on the north-east, Paris flings up her great yellow gleam; far into the wet black Night. For all is

illuminated there, as in the old July nights; the streets deserted, for alarm of war; the Municipals all wakeful; patrols hailing, with their hoarse *Who-goes*. There, as we discover, our poor slim Louison Chabray, her poor nerves all fluttered, is arriving about this very hour. There Usher Maillard will arrive, about an hour hence, 'towards four in the morning.' They report, successively, to a wakeful Hôtel-de-Ville what comfort they can report; which again, with early dawn, large comfortable placards, shall impart to all men.

"Lafayette, in the Hôtel de Noailles, not far from the Château, having now finished haranguing, sits with his officers consulting: at five o'clock the unanimous best counsel is, that a man so tost and toiled for twenty-four hours and more, fling himself on a bed, and seek some rest.

* * * * *

"The dull dawn of a new morning, drizzly and chill, had but broken over Versailles, when it pleased Destiny that a Bodyguard should look out of window, on the right wing of the Château, to see what prospect there was in Heaven and in Earth. Rascality male and female is prowling in view of him. His fasting stomach is, with good cause, sour; he perhaps cannot forbear a passing malison on them; least of all can he forbear answering such.

"Ill words breed worse: till the worst word came; and then the ill deed. Did the maledicent Bodyguard, getting (as was too inevitable) better malediction than he gave, load his musketoon, and threaten to fire; nay, actually fire? Were wise who wist! It stands asserted; to us not credibly. Be this as it may, menaced Rascality, in whinnying scorn, is shaking at all Grates: the fastening of one (some write, it was a chain merely) gives way; Rascality is in the Grand Court, whinnying louder still.

"The maledicent Bodyguard, more Bodyguards than he do now give fire; a man's arm is shattered. Lecointre will depose¹ that 'the Sieur Cardaine, a National Guard without arms, was stabbed.' But see, sure enough, poor Jérôme l'Heritier, an unarmed National Guard he too, 'cabinet maker, a saddler's son, of Paris,' with the down of youthhood still on his chin,—he reels

¹ "Déposition de Lecointre" (in Hist., Part III., pp. 111-115).

death-stricken; rushes to the pavement, scattering it with his blood and brains!—Allelew! Wilder than Irish wakes, rises the howl: of pity; of infinite revenge. In a few moments, the Grate of the inner and inmost Court, which they name Court of Marble, this too is forced, or surprised, and bursts open: the Court of Marble too is overflowed: up the Grand Staircase, up all stairs and entrances rushes the living Deluge! Deshuttés and Varigny, the two sentry Bodyguards, are trodden down, are massacred with a hundred pikes. Women snatch their cutlasses, or any weapon, and storm-in Menadic:—other women lift the corpse of shot Jérôme; lay it down on the marble steps; there shall the livid face and smashed head, dumb for ever, *speak*.

“Wo now to all Bodyguards, mercy is none for them! Miomandre de Sainte-Marie pleads with soft words, on the Grand Staircase, ‘descending four steps:’—to the roaring tornado. His comrades snatch him up, by the skirts and belts; literally, from the jaws of Destruction; and slam-to their Door. This also will stand few instants; the panels shivering in, like potsherds. Barricading serves not: fly fast, ye Bodyguards; rabid Insurrection, like the hellhound Chase, uproaring at your heels!

“The terrorstruck Bodyguards fly, bolting and barricading; it follows. Whitherward? Through hall on hall: wo, now! towards the Queen’s Suite of Rooms, in the furthest room of which the Queen is now asleep. Five sentinels rush through that long Suite; they are in the Anteroom knocking loud: ‘Save the Queen!’ Trembling women fall at their feet with tears; are answered: ‘yes, we will die; save ye the Queen!’

“Tremble not, women, but haste: for lo, another voice shouts far through the outermost door, ‘save the Queen!’ and the door is shut. It is brave Miomandre’s voice that shouts this second warning. He has stormed across imminent death to do it; fronts imminent death, having done it. Brave Tardivet du Repaire, bent on the same desperate service, was borne down with pikes; his comrades hardly snatched him in again alive. Miomandre and Tardivet: let the names of those two Bodyguards, as the names of brave men should, live long.

“Trembling Maids of Honour, one of whom from afar caught glimpse of Miomandre as well as heard him, hastily wrap the

Queen ; not in robes of state. She flies for her life, across the *Œil-de-Bœuf* ; against the main door of which too Insurrection batters. She is in the King's Apartment, in the King's arms ; she clasps her children amid a faithful few. The Imperial-hearted bursts into mother's tears : ' O my friends, save me and my children, *O mes amis, sauvez moi et mes enfans !*' The battering of Insurrectionary axes clangs audible across the *Œil-de-Bœuf*. What an hour !

"Yes, friends : a hideous fearful hour ; shameful alike to Governed and Governor ; wherein Governed and Governor ignominiously testify that their relation is at an end. Rage, which had brewed itself in twenty thousand hearts, for the last four-and-twenty hours, has taken *fire* : Jérôme's brained corpse lies there as live-coal. It is, as we said, the infinite Element bursting in ; wild-surgeing through all corridors and conduits.

"Meanwhile, the poor Bodyguards have got hunted mostly into the *Œil-de-Bœuf*. They may die there, at the King's threshold ; they can do little to defend it. They are heaping *tabourets* (stools of honour), benches and all movables, against the door ; at which the axe of Insurrection thunders. But did brave Miomandre perish, then, at the Queen's outer door ? No, he was fractured, slashed, lacerated, left for dead ; he has nevertheless crawled hither ; and shall live, honoured of loyal France. Remark also, in flat contradiction to much which has been said and sung, that Insurrection did *not* burst that door he had defended ; but hurried elsewhither, seeking new Bodyguards.¹

"Poor Bodyguards, with their Thyestes' Opera-Repast ! Well for them that Insurrection has only pikes and axes ; no right sieging-tools ! It shakes and thunders. Must they all perish miserably, and Royalty with them ? Deshuttés and Varigny, massacred at the first inbreak, have been beheaded in the marble Court : a sacrifice to Jérôme's *manes* : Jourdan with the tile-beard did that duty willingly ; and asked, If there were no more ? Another captive they are leading round the corpse, with howl-chauntings : may not Jourdan again tuck up his sleeves ?

"And louder and louder rages Insurrection within, plundering

¹ Campan, vol. ii., pp. 75-87.

if it cannot kill; louder and louder it thunders at the *Œil-de-Bœuf*: what can now hinder its bursting in?—On a sudden it ceases; the battering has ceased! Wild rushing: the cries grows fainter; there is silence, or the tramp of regular steps; then a friendly knocking: ‘We are the Centre Grenadiers, old Gardes Françaises: open to us, Messieurs of the Garde-du-Corps; we have not forgotten how you saved us at Fontenoy!’¹ The door is opened; enter Captain Gondran and the Centre Grenadiers: there are military embracings; there is sudden deliverance from death into life.

“Strange Sons of Adam! It was to ‘exterminate’ these Gardes-du-Corps that the Centre Grenadiers left home; and now they have rushed to save them from extermination. The memory of common peril, of old help, melts the rough heart; bosom is clasped to bosom, not in war. The King shows himself, one moment, through the door of his apartment, with: ‘Do not hurt my Guards!’—‘*Soyons frères*, let us be brothers!’ cries Captain Gondran; and again dashes off, with levelled bayonets, to sweep the Palace clear.

“Now too Lafayette, suddenly roused, not from sleep (for his eyes had not yet closed), arrives; with passionate popular eloquence, with prompt military word of command. National Guards, suddenly roused, by sound of trumpet and alarm-drum, are all arriving. The death-knell ceases: the first sky-lambent blaze of Insurrection is got damped down; it burns now, if unextinguished, yet flameless, as charred coals do, and not inextinguishable.”

And what (it may be asked) are Mr. Carlyle’s *opinions*?

If this means, whether is he Tory, Whig, or Democrat; is he for things as they are, or for things *nearly* as they are; or is he one who thinks that subverting things as they are, and setting up Democracy is the main thing needful? we answer, he is none of all these. We should say that he has appropriated and made part of his own frame of thought, nearly all that is good in all these several modes of thinking. But it may be asked, what

¹ Toulangeon, vol. i., p. 144.

opinion has Mr. Carlyle formed of the French Revolution, as an event in universal history; and this question is entitled to an answer. It should be, however, premised, that in a history upon the plan of Mr. Carlyle's, the opinions of the writer are a matter of secondary importance. In reading an ordinary historian, we want to know his opinions, because it is mainly his *opinions* of things, and not the things themselves, that he sets before us; or if any features of the things themselves, those chiefly, which his *opinions* lead him to consider as of importance. Our readers have seen sufficient in the extracts we have made for them, to be satisfied that this is not Mr. Carlyle's method. Mr. Carlyle brings the thing before us in the *concrete*—clothed, not indeed in *all* its properties and circumstances, since these are infinite, but in as many of them as can be authentically ascertained and imaginatively realized: not prejudging that some of those properties and circumstances will prove instructive and others not, a prejudgment which is the fertile source of misrepresentation and one-sided historical delineation without end. Every one knows, who has attended (for instance) to the sifting of a complicated case by a court of justice, that as long as our image of the fact remains in the slightest degree vague and hazy and undefined, we cannot tell but that what we do *not* yet distinctly see may be precisely that on which all turns. Mr. Carlyle, therefore, brings us *acquainted* with persons, things, and events, before he suggests to us what to think of them: nay, we see that this is the very process by which he arrives at his own thoughts; he paints the thing to himself—he constructs a picture of it in his own mind, and does not, till afterwards, make any logical propositions about it at all. This done, his logical propositions concerning the thing may be true, or may be false; the thing is there, and any reader may find a totally different set of propositions in it

if he can; as he might in the reality, if *that* had been before him.

We, for our part, do not always agree in Mr. Carlyle's opinions either on things or on men. But we hold it to be impossible that any person should set before himself a perfectly true picture of a great historical event, as it actually happened, and yet that his judgment of it should be radically wrong. Differing partially from some of Mr. Carlyle's detached views, we hold his theory, or theorem, of the Revolution, to be the true theory; true as far as it goes, and wanting little of being as complete as any theory of so vast and complicated a phenomena can be. Nay, we do not think that any rational creature, now that the thing can be looked at calmly, now that we have nothing to hope or to fear from it, can form any second theory on the matter.

Mr. Carlyle's view of the Revolution is briefly this: That it was the breaking down of a great Imposture: which had not always been an Imposture, but had been becoming such for several centuries.

Two bodies—the King and Feudal Nobility, and the Clergy—held their exalted stations, and received the obedience and allegiance which were paid to them, by virtue solely of their affording *guidance* to the people: the one, directing and keeping order among them in their conjunct operations towards the pursuit of their most important temporal interests; the other, ministering to their spiritual teaching and culture. These are the grounds on which alone any government either claims obedience or finds it: for the obedience of twenty-five millions to a few hundred thousand never yet was yielded to avowed tyranny.

Now, this guidance, the original ground of all obedience, the privileged classes *did* for centuries give. The King and the Nobles led the people in war, and protected and

judged them in peace, being the fittest persons to do so who then existed; and the Clergy did teach the best doctrine, did inculcate and impress upon the people the best rule of life then known, and did believe in the doctrine and in the rule of life which they taught, and manifested their belief by their actions, and believed that, in teaching it, they were doing the highest thing appointed to mortals. So far as they did this, both spiritual and temporal rulers deserved and obtained reverence, and willing loyal obedience. But for centuries before the French Revolution, the sincerity which once was in this scheme of society was gradually dying out. The King and the Nobles afforded less and less of any real guidance, of any real protection to the people; and even ceased more and more to fancy that they afforded any. All the important business of society went on without them, nay, mostly in spite of their hindrance. The appointed spiritual teachers ceased to do their duty as teachers, ceased to practise what they taught, ceased to believe it, but alas, not to cant about it, or to receive wages as teachers of it. Thus the whole scheme of society and government in France become one great Lie: the places of honour and power being all occupied by persons whose sole claim to occupy them was the pretence of being what they were not, of doing what they did not, nor even for a single moment attempted to do. All other vileness and profligacy in the rulers of a country were but the inevitable consequences of this inherent vice in the condition of their existence. And, this continuing for centuries, the government growing ever more and more consciously a Lie, the people ever more and more perceiving it to be such, the day of reckoning, which comes for all impostures, came for this: the Good would no longer obey such rulers, the Bad ceased to be in awe of them, and both together rose up and hurled them into chaos.

Such is Mr. Carlyle's idea of what the Revolution was.

And now, as to the melancholy turn it took, the horrors which accompanied it, the iron despotism by which it was forced to wind itself up, and the smallness of its positive results, compared with those which were hoped for by the sanguine in its commencement.

Mr. Carlyle's theory of these things is also a simple one: That the men, most of them good, and many of them among the most instructed of their generation, who attempted at that period to regenerate France, failed in what it was impossible that anyone should succeed in: namely, in attempting to found a government, to create a new order of society, a new set of institutions and habits, among a people having no convictions to base such order of things upon. That the existing government, habits, state of society, were bad, this the people were thoroughly convinced of, and rose up as one man, to declare, in every language of deed and word, that they would no more endure it. What was, was bad; but what was good, nobody had determined; no *opinion* on that subject had rooted itself in the people's minds; nor was there even any person, or any body of persons, deference for whom was rooted in their minds and whose word they were willing to take for all the rest. Suppose, then, that the twelve hundred members of the Constituent Assembly had even been gifted with perfect knowledge what arrangement of society was best:—how were they to get time to establish it? Or how were they to hold the people in obedience to it when established? A people with no preconceived reverence, either for it or for them; a people like slaves broke from their fetters—with all man's boundless desires let loose in indefinite expectation, and all the influences of habit and imagination which keep mankind patient under the denial of what they crave for, annihilated for the time, never to be restored but in some quite different shape?

Faith, doubtless, in representative institutions, there

was, and of the firmest kind; but unhappily this was not enough: for all that representative institutions themselves can do, is to give practical effect to the faith of the people in something else. What is a representative constitution? Simply a set of contrivances for ascertaining the convictions of the people; for enabling them to declare what men they have faith in; or, failing such, what things the majority of them will insist upon having done to them—by what *rule* they are willing to be governed. But what if the majority have not faith in any men, nor know even in the smallest degree what things they wish to have done, in what manner they would be governed? This was the condition of the French people. To have made it otherwise was possible, but required time; and time, unhappily, in a Revolution, is not given. A great man, indeed, may do it, by inspiring at least faith in himself, which may last till the tree he has planted has taken root, and can stand alone; such apparently was Solon,¹ and such perhaps, had he lived, might have been Mirabeau: nay, in the absence of other greatness, even a great quack may temporarily do it; as Napoleon, himself a mixture of great man and great quack, did in some measure exemplify. Revolutions sweep much away, but if any Revolution since the beginning of the world ever founded anything, towards which the minds of the people had not been growing for generations previous, it has been founded by some individual man.

Much more must be added to what has now been said, to make the statement of Mr. Carlyle's opinions on the

¹ A more definite, as well as, we think, a juster idea of this great man, than we have met with elsewhere, may be found in Mr. Bulwer's "Athens"; a book which, if it be completed as it has been begun, will, by its effect in correcting prejudices which have been most sedulously fostered, and diffusing true notions on one of the most interesting of all parts of the world's history, entitle its author to no humble meed of praise. [The late Lord Lytton's "Athens, its Rise and Fall," remains a fragment.—ED.]

French Revolution anything like complete; nor shall we any further set forth, either such of those opinions as we agree in, or those, far less numerous, from which we disagree. Nevertheless, we will not leave the subject without pointing out what appears to us to be the most prominent defect in our author's general mode of thinking. His own method being that of the artist, not of the man of science—working as he does by figuring things to himself as wholes, not dissecting them into their parts—he appears, though perhaps it is but appearance, to entertain something like a contempt for the opposite method; and to go as much too far in his distrust of analysis and generalization, as others (the Constitutional party, for instance, in the French Revolution) went too far in their reliance upon it.

Doubtless, in the infinite complexities of human affairs, any general theorem which a wise man will form concerning them, must be regarded as a mere approximation to truth; an approximation obtained by striking an average of many cases, and consequently not exactly fitting any one case. No wise man, therefore, will stand upon his theorem only—neglecting to look into the specialities of the case in hand, and see what features *that* may present which may take it out of any theorem, or bring it within the compass of more theorems than one. But the far greater number of people—when they have got a formula by rote, when they can bring the matter in hand within some maxim “in that case made and provided” by the traditions of the vulgar, by the doctrines of their sect or school, or by some generalization of their own—do not think it necessary to let their mind's eye rest upon the thing itself at all; but deliberate and act, not upon knowledge of the thing, but upon a hearsay of it; being (to use a frequent illustration of our author) provided with spectacles, they fancy it not needful to use their eyes. It

should be understood that general principles are not intended to dispense with thinking and examining, but to help us to think and examine. When the object itself is out of our reach, and we cannot examine into it, we must follow general principles, because, by doing so, we are not so likely to go wrong, and almost certain not to go so far wrong, as if we floated on the boundless ocean of mere conjecture; but when we are not driven to guess, when we have means and appliances for observing, general principles are nothing more or other than helps towards a better use of those means and appliances.

Thus far we and Mr. Carlyle travel harmoniously together; but here we apparently diverge. For, having admitted that general principles (or *formulae*, as our author calls them, after old Mirabeau, the crabbed *ami des hommes*) are helps to observation, not substitutes for it, we must add, that they are *necessary* helps, and that without general principles no one ever observed a particular case to any purpose. For, except by general principles, how do we bring the light of past experience to bear upon the new case? The essence of past experience lies embodied in those logical, abstract propositions, which our author makes so light of:—there, and nowhere else. From them we learn what has ordinarily been found true, or even recal what we ourselves have found true, in innumerable unnamed and unremembered cases, more or less resembling the present. We are hence taught, at the least, what we shall *probably* find true in the present case; and although this, which is only a probability, may be lazily acquiesced in and acted upon without further inquiry as a certainty, the risk even so is infinitely less than if we began without a theory, or even a probable hypothesis. Granting that all the facts of the particular instance are within the reach of observation, how difficult is the work of observing, how almost impossible that of disentangling a complicated case,

if, when we begin, no one view of it appears to us more probable than another? Without a hypothesis to commence with, we do not even know what end to begin at, what points to inquire into. Nearly everything that has ever been ascertained by scientific observers, was brought to light in the attempt to test and verify some theory. To start from a theory, but not to see the object through the theory; to bring light with us, but also to receive other light from whencesoever it comes; such is the part of the philosopher, of the true practical *seer* or person of insight.

Connected with the tendency which we fancy we perceive in our author, to undervalue general principles, is another tendency which we think is perceptible in him, to set too low a value on what constitutions and forms of government can do. Be it admitted once for all, that no form of government will enable you, as our author has elsewhere said, "given a world of rogues, to produce an honesty by their united action;" nor when a people are wholly without faith either in man or creed, has any representative constitution a charm to render them governable well, or even governable at all. On the other hand, Mr. Carlyle must no less admit, that when a nation *has* faith in any men, or any set of principles, representative institutions furnish the only regular and peaceable mode in which that faith can quietly declare itself, and those men, or those principles, obtain the predominance. It is surely no trifling matter to have a legalized means whereby the guidance will always be in the hands of the Acknowledged Wisest, who, if not always the really wisest, are at least those whose wisdom, such as it may be, is the most available for the purpose. Doubtless it is the natural law of representative governments that the power is shared, in varying proportions, between the really skilfullest and the skilfullest quacks; with a tendency, in easy times, towards the preponderance of the quacks, in the "times which try

men's souls," towards that of the true men. Improvements enough may be expected as mankind improve, but that the best and wisest shall always be accounted such, *that* we need not expect; because the quack can always steal, and vend for his own profit, as much of the good ware as is marketable. But is not all this to the full as likely to happen in every other kind of government as in a representative one? with these differences* in favour of representative government, which will be found perhaps to be its only real and universal pre-eminence: That it alone is government by consent—government by mutual compromise and compact; while all others are, in one form or another, governments by constraint: That it alone proceeds by quiet muster of opposing strengths, when that which is really weakest sees itself to be such, and peaceably gives way; a benefit never yet realized but in countries inured to a representative government; elsewhere nothing but actual blows can show who is strongest, and every great dissension of opinion must break out into a civil war.

We have thus briefly touched upon the two principal points on which we take exception, not so much to any opinion of the author, as to the tone of sentiment which runs through the book; a tone of sentiment which otherwise, for justness and nobleness, stands almost unrivalled in the writings of our time. A deep catholic sympathy with human nature, with all natural human feelings, looks out from every page of these volumes; justice administered in love, to all kind of human beings, bad and good; the most earnest exalted feeling of moral distinctions, with the most generous allowances for whatever partial confounding of these distinctions, either natural weakness or perverse circumstances can excuse. No greatness, no strength, no goodness or lovingness, passes unrecognized or unhonoured by him. All the sublimity of "the simultaneous death-defiance of twenty-five millions" speaks

itself forth in his pages—not the less impressively, because the unspeakable folly and incoherency, which always in real life are not one step from, but actually pervade, the sublimities of so large a body (and did so most notably in this instance) are no less perceptible to his keen sense of the ludicrous. We presume it is this which has caused the book to be accused, even in print, of “flippancy,” a term which appears to us singularly misapplied.¹ For is not this mixture and confused entanglement of the great and the contemptible, precisely what we meet with in nature? and would not a history, which did not make us not only see this, but feel it, be deceptive; and give an impression which would be the more false, the greater the general vivacity and vigour of the delineation? And indeed the capacity to see and feel what is lovable, admirable, in a thing, and what is laughable in it, at the same time, constitutes humour; the quality to which we owe a Falstaff, a Parson Adams, an Uncle Toby, and Mause Headriggs and Barons of Bradwardine without end. You meet in this book with passages of grave drollery (drollery unsought for, arising from the simple statement of facts, and a true natural feeling of them) not inferior to the best in Mr. Peacock’s novels; and immediately or soon after comes a soft note as of dirge music, or

¹ This critique referred to was probably that of the “Athenæum.” The need there was at this time for such an article as Mill’s, to save Carlyle from his fate at the hands of the average critic, is fairly demonstrated in the following passages from the “Athenæum” article, which was dated May 20th, 1837: “Originality of thought is unquestionably the best reason for writing a book; originality of style is a rare and refreshing merit; but it is paying rather dear for one’s whistle to qualify for it in the university of Bedlam. . . . It is one thing to put forth a few pages of quaintness, neologism, and whimsical coxcombry; and another to carry such questionable qualities through three long volumes of misplaced persiflage and flippant pseudo-philosophy.”—ED.

solemn choral song of old Greek tragedy, which makes the heart too full for endurance, and forces you to close the book and rest for a while.

Again, there are aphorisms which deserve to live for ever; characters drawn with a few touches, and indicating a very remarkable insight into many of the obscurest regions of human nature; much genuine philosophy, disguised though it often be in a poetico-metaphysical vesture of a most questionable kind; and, in short, new and singular but not therefore absurd or unpractical views taken of many important things. A most original book; original not least in its complete sincerity, its disregard of the merely conventional: every idea and sentiment is given out exactly as it is thought and felt, fresh from the soul of the writer, and in such language (conformable to precedent or not) as is most capable of representing it in the form in which it exists there. And hence the critics have begun to call the style "affected;" a term which conventional people, whether in literature or society, invariably bestow upon the unreservedly natural.¹

In truth, every book which is eminently original, either

¹ A curious instance of this occurred lately. Mr. D'Israeli, a writer of considerable literary daring, tried in his novel, "Henrietta Temple," one of the boldest experiments he had yet ventured upon; that of making his lovers and his other characters speak naturally the language of real talk, not dressed-up talk; such language as all persons talk who are not in the presence of an audience. A questionable experiment—allowable as an experiment, but scarcely otherwise; for the reader does not want pure nature, but nature idealized; nobody wants the verbiage, the repetitions and slovenlinesses, of real conversation, but only the substance of what is interesting in such conversation, divested of these. There was much which might have been said by critics against Mr. D'Israeli's experiment; but what did they say? "Affectation!"—that was their cry. Natural conversation in print looked so unnatural to men of artificiality; it was so unlike all their experience—of books!

in matter or style, has a hard battle to fight before it can obtain even pardon for its originality, much less applause. Well, therefore, may this be the case when a book is original, not in matter only or in style only, but in both; and, moreover, written in prose, with a fervour and exaltation of feeling which is only tolerated in verse, if even there. And when we consider that Wordsworth, Coleridge, and others of their time, whose deviation from the beaten track was but a stone's throw compared with Mr. Carlyle, were ignominiously hooted out of court by the wise tribunals which in those days dispensed justice in such matters, and had to wait for a second generation before the sentence could be reversed, and their names placed among the great names of our literature, we might well imagine that the same or a worse fate awaits Mr. Carlyle; did we not believe that those very writers, aided by circumstances, have made straight the way for Mr. Carlyle and for much else. This very phenomenon, of the different estimation of Wordsworth and Coleridge, now, and thirty years ago, is among the indications of one of the most conspicuous new elements which have sprung up in the European mind during those years; an insatiable demand for realities, come of conventionalities and formalities what may; of which desire the literary phasis is, a large tolerance for every feeling which is natural and not got-up, for every picture taken from the life and not from other pictures, however it may clash with traditionary notions of elegance or congruity. The book before us needs to be read with this catholic spirit; if we read it captiously, we shall never have done finding fault. But no true poet, writing sincerely and following the promptings of his own genius, can fail to be contemptible to any who desire to find him so; and if even Milton's "*Areopagitica*," of which now, it would seem, no one dares speak with only moderate praise, were now first to issue from the press, it would be turned

from with contempt by every one who will think or speak disparagingly of this work of Mr. Carlyle.

We add one short extract more from near the end of the book ; a summing up, as it were, of the morality of the great catastrophe :

“The Convention, now grown Anti-Jacobin, did, with an eye to justify and fortify itself, publish lists of what the Reign of Terror had perpetrated—lists of persons guillotined. The lists, cries splenetic Abbé Montgaillard, were not complete. They contain the names of—how many persons thinks the reader ?—Two Thousand all but a few. There were above four thousand, cries Montgaillard ; so many were guillotined, fusilladed, noyaded, done to dire death ; of whom nine hundred were women. It is a horrible sum of human lives, M. l’Abbé ; some ten times as many shot rightly on a field of battle, and one might have had his Glorious-Victory with *Te Deum*. It is not far from the two-hundredth part of what perished in the entire Seven Years’ War. By which Seven Years’ War, did not the great Fritz wrench Silesia from the great Theresa ; and a Pompadour, stung by epigrams, satisfy herself that she could not be an Agnes Sorel ? The head of a man is a strange vacant sounding-shell, M. l’Abbé, and studies Cocker to small purpose.

“But what if History, somewhere on this planet, were to hear of a Nation, the third soul of whom had not, for thirty weeks each year, as many third-rate potatoes as would sustain him ? History, in that case, feels bound to consider that starvation is starvation ; that starvation from age to age presupposes much : History ventures to assert that the French Sansculotte of ninety-three, who, roused from long death-sleep, could rush at once to the frontiers and die fighting for an immortal Hope and Faith of Deliverance for him and his, was but the *second*-miserablest of men ! The Irish Sans-potato, had he not senses then ; nay, a soul ? In his frozen darkness, it was bitter for him to die famishing ; bitter to see his children famish. It was bitter for him to be a beggar, a liar, and a knave. Nay, if that dreary Greenland-wind of benighted Want, perennial from sire to son, had frozen him into a kind of torpor and numb callosity, so that he saw not, felt not, was this, for a creature with a soul in it, some assuagement, or the cruellest wretchedness of all ?

“Such things were—such things are; and they go on in silence peaceably; and Sansculottisms follow them. History, looking back over this France through long times, back to Turgot’s time, for instance, when dumb Drudgery staggered up to its King’s Palace, and in wide expanse of sallow faces, squalor and winged raggedness, presented, hieroglyphically, its Petition of Grievances, and for answer got hanged on a ‘new gallows forty feet high,’—confesses, mournfully, that there is no period to be met with, in which the general twenty-five millions of France suffered *less* than in this period which they name Reign of Terror! But it was not the Dumb Millions that suffered here; it was the Speaking Thousands, and Hundreds, and Units, who shrieked, and published, and made the world ring with their wail, as they could and should: that is the grand peculiarity. The frightfullest Births of Time are never the loud speaking ones, for these soon die; they are the silent ones which can live from century to century! Anarchy, hateful as Death, is abhorrent to the whole nature of man; and so must itself soon die.

“Wherefore let all men know what of depth and of height is still revealed in man; and, with fear and wonder, with just sympathy and just antipathy, with clear eye and open heart, contemplate it and appropriate it; and draw innumerable inferences from it. This inference, for example, among the first:—That ‘if the gods of this lower world will sit on their glittering thrones, indolent as Epicurus’ gods, with the living Chaos of Ignorance and Hunger weltering uncared for at their feet, and smooth Parasites preaching Peace, peace, when there is no peace,’ then the dark chaos, it seems, will rise. . . . That there be no second Sansculottism in our earth for a thousand years, let us understand well what the first was; and let Rich and Poor of us go and do *otherwise*.

A.

BENTHAM.

[1838.]

BENTHAM,¹

THERE are two men, recently deceased, to whom their country is indebted not only for the greater part of the important ideas which have been thrown into circulation among its thinking men in their time, but for a revolution in its general modes of thought and investigation.² These men, dissimilar in almost all else, agreed in being closet-students—secluded in a peculiar degree, by circumstances and character, from the business and intercourse of the world: and both were, through a large portion of their lives, regarded by those who took the lead in opinion (when they happened to hear of them) with feelings akin to contempt. But they were destined to renew a lesson given to mankind by every age, and always disregarded—to shew that speculative philosophy, which to the superficial appears a thing so remote from the business of life and the outward interests of men, is in reality the thing on earth which most influences them, and in the long run overbears every other influence save those which it must itself obey. The

¹ The Works of Jeremy Bentham; now first collected under the superintendence of his Executor, John Bowring. Parts I. to IV. Tait, Edinburgh, 1838. This was the original heading. The article appeared in the "London and Westminster Review" for August, 1838.—ED.

² Bentham and Coleridge died respectively 1832 and 1834.—ED.

writers of whom we speak have never been read by the multitude; except for the more slight of their works, their readers have been few: but they have been the teachers of the teachers; there is hardly to be found in England an individual of any importance in the world of mind, who (whatever opinions he may have afterwards adopted) did not first learn to think from one of these two; and though their influences have but begun to diffuse themselves through these intermediate channels over society at large, there is already scarcely a publication of any consequence addressed to the educated classes, which, if these persons had not existed, would not have been very different from what it is. These men are, Jeremy Bentham and Samuel Taylor Coleridge—the two great seminal minds of England in their age.

No comparison is intended here between the minds or influences of these remarkable men: this were impossible unless there were first formed a complete judgment of each considered apart. It is our intention to attempt, on the present occasion, an estimate of one of them; the only one, a completed edition of whose works is yet in progress, and who, in the classification which may be made of all writers into movement and Conservative, belongs to the same division with ourselves. For although they were far too great men to be correctly designated by either appellation exclusively, yet in the main, Bentham was a movement philosopher, Coleridge a Conservative one. The influence of the former has made itself felt chiefly on movement minds, of the latter on Conservative ones; and the two systems of concentric circles which the shock given by them is spreading over the ocean of mind, have only just begun to meet and intersect. The writings of both contain severe lessons to their own side, on many of the errors and faults they are most addicted to: but to Bentham it was given to discern more particularly those truths with which existing doctrines

and institutions were at variance ; to Coleridge, the neglected truths which lay *in* them.

A man of great knowledge of the world, and of the highest reputation for practical talent and sagacity among the official men of his time (himself no follower of Bentham, nor of any partial or exclusive school whatever) once said to us, as the result of his observation, that to Bentham more than to any other source might be traced the questioning spirit, the disposition to demand the *why* of every-thing, which had gained so much ground and was producing such important consequences in these times. The more this assertion is examined, the more true it will be found. Bentham has been in this age and country the great questioner of things established. It is by the influence of the modes of thought with which his writings inoculated a considerable number of thinking men, that the yoke of authority has been broken, and innumerable opinions, formerly received on tradition as incontestable, are put upon their defence, and required to give an account of themselves. Who, before Bentham (whatever controversies might exist on points of detail), dared to speak disrespectfully, in express terms, of the British Constitution, or the English Law? He did so; and his arguments and his example together encouraged others. We do not mean that his writings caused the Reform Bill, or that the Appropriation Clause owns him as its parent: the changes which have been made, and the greater changes which will be made, in our institutions, are not the work of philosophers, but of the interests and instincts of large portions of society recently grown into strength. But Bentham gave voice to those interests and instincts: until he spoke out, those who found our institutions unsuited to them did not dare to say so, did not dare consciously to think so; they had never heard those institutions questioned by

cultivated men, by men of acknowledged intellect; and it is not in the nature of uninstructed minds to resist the united authority of the instructed. Bentham broke the spell. It was not Bentham by his own writings; it was Bentham through the minds and pens which those writings fed—through the men in more direct contact with the world, into whom his spirit passed. If the superstition about ancestral wisdom has fallen into decay; if the public are grown familiar with the idea that their laws and institutions are in great part not the product of intellect and virtue, but of modern corruption grafted upon ancient barbarism; if the hardest innovation is no longer scouted *because* it is an innovation—establishments no longer considered sacred because they are establishments—it will be found that those who have accustomed the public mind to those ideas have learnt them in Bentham's school, and that the assault on ancient institutions has been, and is, carried on for the most part with his weapons. It matters not although these thinkers, or indeed thinkers of any description, have been but scantily found among the persons prominently and ostensibly at the head of the Reform movement. All movements, except revolutionary ones, are headed, not by those who originate them, but by those who know best how to compromise between the old opinions and the new. The father of English innovation, both in doctrines and in institutions, is Bentham: he is the great *subversive*, or, in the language of *continental philosophers*, the great *critical*, thinker of his age and country.

We consider this, however, to be not his highest title to fame. Were this all, he were to be ranked among the lowest order of the potentates of mind—the negative, or destructive philosophers; those who can perceive what is false, but not what is true; who awaken the human mind to the inconsistencies and absurdities of time-sanctioned opinions and institutions, but substitute nothing in the

place of what they take away. We have no desire to undervalue the services of such persons: mankind have been deeply indebted to them; nor will there ever be a lack of work for them, in a world in which so many false things are believed, in which so many which have been true, are believed long after they have ceased to be true. The qualities, however, which fit men for perceiving anomalies, without perceiving the truths which would rectify them, are not among the rarest of endowments. Courage, verbal acuteness, command over the forms of argumentation, and a popular (style) will make, out of the shallowest man, with a sufficient lack of reverence, a first-rate negative philosopher. Such men have never been wanting in periods of culture; and the period in which Bentham formed his early impressions was emphatically their reign, in proportion to its barrenness in the more noble products of the human mind. An age of formalism in the Church and corruption in the State, when the most valuable part of the meaning of spiritual truths had faded from the minds even of those who retained from habit a mechanical belief in them, was the time to raise up all kinds of sceptical philosophy. Accordingly, France had Voltaire, and his school of negative thinkers, and England had the profoundest negative thinker upon record, David Hume: a man, the peculiarities of whose mind qualified him to detect failure of proof, and want of logical consistency, at a depth which French sceptics, with their comparatively feeble powers of analysis and abstraction, stopt far short of. [Hume, the prince of *dilettanti*, from whose writings one will hardly learn that there is such a thing as truth, far less that it is attainable; but only that the *pro* and *con.* of everything may be argued with infinite ingenuity, and furnishes a fine intellectual exercise. This absolute scepticism in speculation very naturally brought him round to Toryism in practice; for if no faith can be had in the

operations of human intellect, and one side of a question is about as likely as another to be true, a man will commonly be inclined to prefer that order of things which, being no more wrong than every other, he has hitherto found compatible with his private comforts. Accordingly Hume's scepticism agreed very well with the comfortable classes, until it began to reach the uncomfortable: when the discovery was made that, although men could be content to be rich without a faith, men would not be content to be poor without it, and religion and morality came into fashion again as the cheap defence of rents and tithes.]

If Bentham had merely continued the work of Hume, he would scarcely have been heard of in philosophy; for he was far inferior to Hume in Hume's qualities, and was in no respect fitted to excel as a metaphysician. We must not look for subtlety, or the power of recondite analysis, among his intellectual characteristics. In the former quality, few great thinkers have ever been so deficient; and to find the latter, in any considerable measure, in a mind acknowledging any kindred with his, we must have recourse to the late Mr. Mill¹—a man who united all the great qualities of the metaphysicians of the eighteenth century, with others of a different complexion, admirably qualifying him to complete and correct their work. Bentham had not these peculiar gifts; but he possessed others, not inferior, which were not possessed by any of his precursors; which have made him a source of light to a generation which has far outgrown their influence, and, as we called him, the chief subversive thinker of an age which has long lost all that *they* could subvert.

✓ To speak of him first as a merely negative philosopher—as one who refutes illogical arguments, exposes sophistry, detects contradiction and absurdity; even in that capacity

¹ James Mill, the author's father, who died in June, 1836. This essay, as first published, was merely signed "A."—ED.

there was a wide field left vacant for him by Hume, and which he has occupied to an unprecedented extent; the field of practical abuses. This was Bentham's peculiar province: to this he was called by the whole bent of his disposition: to carry the warfare against absurdity into things practical. His was an essentially practical mind. It was by practical abuses that his mind was first turned to speculation—by the abuses of the profession which was chosen for him, that of the law. He has himself stated what particular abuse first gave that shock to his mind, the recoil of which has made the whole mountain of abuse totter; it was the custom of making the client pay for three attendances in the office of a Master in Chancery, when only one was given. The law, he found, on examination, was full of such things. But were these discoveries of his? No; they were known to every lawyer who ever practised, to every judge who ever sat upon the bench, and neither before nor for long after did they cause any apparent uneasiness to the consciences of these learned persons, nor hinder them from asserting, whenever occasion offered, in books, in parliament, or on the bench, that the law was the perfection of reason. During so many generations, in each of which thousands of educated young men were successively placed in Bentham's position and with Bentham's opportunities, he alone was found with sufficient moral sensibility and self-reliance to say in his heart that these things, however profitable they might be, were frauds, and that between them and himself there should be a gulf fixed. To this rare union of self-reliance and moral sensibility we are indebted for all that Bentham has done. Sent to Oxford by his father at the unusually early age of fifteen—required, on admission, to declare his belief in the thirty-nine articles—he felt it necessary to examine them; and the examination suggested scruples, which he sought to get removed, but instead of the satisfaction he expected,

was told that it was not for boys like him to set up their judgment against the great men of the Church. After a struggle, he signed; but the impression that he had done an immoral act, never left him; he considered himself to have signed a falsehood, and throughout life he never relaxed in his indignant denunciations of all laws which command such falsehoods, all institutions which attach rewards to the telling of them.

By thus carrying the war of criticism and refutation, the conflict with falsehood and absurdity, into the field of practical evils, Bentham, even if he had done nothing else, would have earned an important place in the history of intellect. He carried on the warfare without intermission. To this, not only many of his most piquant chapters, but some of the most finished of his entire works, are entirely devoted: the "Defence of Usury;" the "Book of Fallacies;" and the onslaught upon Blackstone, published anonymously under the title of "A Fragment on Government," which, though a first production, and of a writer afterwards so much ridiculed for his style, excited the highest admiration no less for its composition than for its thoughts, and was attributed by turns to Lord Mansfield, to Lord Camden, and (by Dr. Johnson) to Dunning, one of the greatest masters of style among the lawyers of his day. These writings are altogether original; though of the negative school, they resemble nothing previously produced by negative philosophers; and would have sufficed to create for Bentham, among the subversive thinkers of modern Europe, a place peculiarly his own. But it is not these writings that constitute the real distinction between him and them. There was a deeper difference. It was that they were purely negative thinkers, he was positive: they only assailed error, he made it a point of conscience not to do so until he thought he could plant instead the corresponding truth. Their character was exclusively analytic,

his was synthetic. They took for their starting-point the received opinion on any subject, dug round it with their logical implements, pronounced its foundations defective, and condemned it: he began *de novo*, laid his own foundations deeply and firmly, built up his own structure, and bid mankind compare the two; it was when he had solved the problem himself, or thought he had done so, that he declared all other solutions to be erroneous. Hence, what they did, will not last; it must perish, much of it has already perished, with the errors which it exploded: what he did has its own value, by which it must outlast all errors to which it is opposed. Though we may reject, as we often must, his practical conclusions, yet his premises, the collections of facts and observations from which his conclusions were drawn, remain for ever, a part of the materials of philosophy.

A place, therefore, must be assigned to Bentham among the masters of wisdom, the great teachers and permanent intellectual ornaments of the human race. He is among those who have enriched mankind with imperishable gifts; and although these do not transcend all other gifts, nor entitle him to those honours "above all Greek, above all Roman fame," which by a natural reaction against the neglect and contempt of the world, some few of his admirers were once disposed to accumulate upon him, yet to refuse an admiring recognition of what he was, on account of what he was not, is a much worse error, and one which, pardonable in the vulgar, is no longer permitted to any cultivated and instructed mind.

If we were asked to say, in the fewest possible words, *what* we conceive to be Bentham's place among these great intellectual benefactors of humanity; what he was, and what he was not; what kind of service he did and did not render to truth; we should say—he was not a great philosopher, but he was a great reformer in philosophy.

He brought into philosophy something which it greatly needed, and for want of which it was at a stand. It was not his doctrines which did this, it was his mode of arriving at them. He introduced into morals and politics those habits of thought and modes of investigation, which are essential to the idea of science; and the absence of which made those departments of inquiry, as physics had been before Bacon, a field of interminable discussion, leading to no result. It was not his opinions, in short, but his method, that constituted the novelty and the value of what he did; a value beyond all price, even though we should reject ~~the~~ the whole, as we unquestionably must a large part, of the opinions themselves.

Bentham's method may be shortly described as the method of detail; of treating wholes by separating them into their parts, abstractions by resolving them into Things, —classes and generalities by distinguishing them into the individuals of which they are made up; and breaking every question into pieces before attempting to solve it. The precise amount of originality of this process, considered as a logical conception—its degree of connexion with the methods of physical science, or with the previous labours of Bacon, Hobbes, or Locke—is not an essential consideration in this place. Whatever originality there was in the method—in the subjects he applied it to, and in the rigidity with which he adhered to it, there was the greatest. Hence his interminable classifications. Hence his elaborate demonstrations of the most acknowledged truths. That murder, incendiarism, robbery, are mischievous actions, he will not take for granted without proof; let the thing appear ever so self-evident, he will know the why and the how of it with the last degree of precision; he will distinguish all the different mischiefs of a crime, whether of the *first*, the *second*, or the *third* order, namely, 1. the evil to the sufferer, and to his personal connexions; 2. the *danger*

from example, and the *alarm* or painful feeling of insecurity; and 3. the discouragement to industry and useful pursuits arising from the *alarm*, and the trouble and resources which must be expended in warding off the *danger*. After this enumeration, he will prove to you from the laws of human feeling, that even the first of these evils, the sufferings of the immediate victim, will on the average greatly outweigh the pleasure reaped by the offender; much more when all the other evils are taken into account. Unless this could be proved, he would account the infliction of punishment unwarrantable; and for taking the trouble to prove it formally, his defence is, "there are truths which it is necessary to prove, not for their own sakes, because they are acknowledged, but that an opening may be made for the reception of other truths which depend upon them. It is in this manner we provide for the reception of first principles, which, once received, prepare the way for admission of all other truths."¹ To which may be added, that in this manner also do we discipline the mind for practising the same sort of dissection upon questions more complicated and of more doubtful issue.

It is a sound maxim, and one which all close thinkers have felt, but which no one before Bentham ever so consistently applied, that error lurks in generalities: that the human mind is not capable of embracing a complex whole, until it has surveyed and catalogued the parts of which that whole is made up; that abstractions are not facts, but an abridged mode of expressing facts, and that the only practical mode of dealing with them is to trace them back to the facts (whether of experience or of consciousness) of which they are the expression. Proceeding on this principle, Bentham makes short work with the ordinary modes of moral and political reasoning. These, it appeared to

¹ Part I. pp. 161-2, of the new edition.

him, when hunted to their source, for the most part terminated in *phrases*. In politics, liberty, social order, constitution, law of nature, social compact, etc., were the catchwords: ethics had its analogous ones. Such were the arguments on which the gravest questions of morality and policy were made to turn; not reasons, but allusions to reasons; sacramental expressions, by which a summary appeal was made to some general sentiment of mankind, or to some maxim in familiar use, which might be true or not, but the limitations of which no one had ever critically examined. And this satisfied other people; but not Bentham. He required something more than opinion as a reason for opinion. Whenever he found a *phrase* used as an argument for or against anything, he insisted upon knowing what it meant; whether it appealed to any standard, or gave intimation of any matter of fact relevant to the question; and if he could not find that it did either, he treated it as an attempt on the part of the disputant to impose his own individual sentiment on other people, without giving them a reason for it; a "contrivance for avoiding the obligation of appealing to any external standard, and for prevailing upon the reader to accept of the author's sentiment and opinion as a reason, and that a sufficient one, for itself." Bentham shall speak for himself on this subject: the passage is from his first systematic work, "Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation" [vol. i., p. 8 of the present publication], and we could scarcely quote anything more strongly exemplifying both the strength and weakness of his system of philosophy.

"It is curious enough to observe the variety of inventions men have hit upon, and the variety of phrases they have brought forward, in order to conceal from the world, and, if possible, from themselves, this very general and therefore very pardonable self-sufficiency.

“1. One man says, he has a thing made on purpose to tell him what is right and what is wrong; and that is called a ‘moral sense:’ and then he goes to work at his ease, and says, such a thing is right, and such a thing is wrong—why? ‘Because my moral sense tells me it is.’

“2. Another man comes and alters the phrase: leaving out *moral*, and putting in *common* in the room of it. He then tells you that his *common* sense tells him what is right and wrong, as surely as the other’s moral sense did: meaning by common sense a sense of some kind or other, which, he says, is possessed by all mankind: the sense of those whose sense is not the same as the author’s being struck out as not worth taking. This contrivance does better than the other; for a moral sense being a new thing, a man may feel about him a good while without being able to find it out: but common sense is as old as the creation; and there is no man but would be ashamed to be thought not to have as much of it as his neighbours. It has another great advantage: by appearing to share power, it lessens envy; for when a man gets upon this ground, in order to anathematise those who differ from him, it is not by a *sic volo sic jubeo*, but by a *velitis jubeatis*.

“3. Another man comes, and says, that as to a moral sense indeed, he cannot find that he has any such thing: that, however, he has an *understanding*, which will do quite as well. This understanding, he says, is the standard of right and wrong: it tells him so and so. All good and wise men understand as he does: if other men’s understandings differ in any part from his, so much the worse for them: it is a sure sign they are either defective or corrupt.

“4. Another man says, that there is an eternal and immutable Rule of Right: that that rule of right dictates so and so: and then he begins giving you his sentiments upon anything that comes uppermost: and these sentiments (you are to take for granted) are so many branches of the eternal rule of right.

“5. Another man, or perhaps the same man (it is no matter), says that there are certain practices conformable, and others repugnant, to the Fitness of Things; and then he tells you, at his leisure, what practices are conformable, and what repugnant: just as he happens to like a practice or dislike it.

“6. A great multitude of people are continually talking of the

Law of Nature ; and then they go on giving you their sentiments about what is right and what is wrong : and these sentiments, you are to understand, are so many chapters and sections of the Law of Nature.

"7. Instead of the phrase, Law of Nature, you have sometimes Law of Reason, Right Reason, Natural Justice, Natural Equity, Good Order. Any of them will do equally well. This latter is most used in politics. The three last are much more tolerable than the others, because they do not very explicitly claim to be anything more than phrases : they insist but feebly upon the being looked upon as so many positive standards of themselves, and seem content to be taken, upon occasion, for phrases expressive of the conformity of the thing in question to the proper standard, whatever that may be. On most occasions, however, it will be better to say utility : utility is clearer, as referring more explicitly to pain and pleasure.

"8. We have one philosopher, who says, there is no harm in anything in the world but in telling a lie ; and that if, for example, you were to murder your own father, this would only be a particular way of saying, he was not your father. Of course when this philosopher sees anything that he does not like, he says, it is a particular way of telling a lie. It is saying, that the act ought to be done, or may be done, when, *in truth*, it ought not to be done.

"9. The fairest and openist of them all is that sort of man who speaks out, and says, I am of the number of the Elect : now God himself takes care to inform the Elect what is right : and that with so good effect, and let them strive ever so, they cannot help not only knowing it but practising it. If therefore a man wants to know what is right and what is wrong, he has nothing to do but to come to me." *v.g. (Bentham's)*

[Few, we believe, are now of opinion that these phrases and similar ones have nothing more in them than Bentham saw. But it will be as little pretended now-a-days, by any person of authority as a thinker, that the phrases can pass as reasons, till after their meaning has been completely analysed, and translated into precise language : until the standard they appeal to is ascertained, and the *sense* in

which, and the *limits* within which, they are admissible as arguments, accurately marked out.]

It is the introduction into the philosophy of human conduct, of this method of detail—of this practice of never reasoning about wholes until they have been resolved into their parts, nor about abstractions until they have been translated into realities—that constitutes the originality of Bentham in philosophy, and makes him the great reformer of the moral and political branch of it. To what he terms the “exhaustive method of classification,” which is but one branch of this more general method, he himself ascribes everything original in the systematic and elaborate work from which we have quoted. The generalities of his philosophy itself have little or no novelty: to ascribe any to the doctrine that general utility is the foundation of morality, would imply great ignorance of the history of philosophy, of general literature, and of Bentham’s own writings. He derived the idea, as he says himself, from Hume and Helvetius; and it was the doctrine no less, of the adversaries of those writers, the religious philosophers of that age, prior to Reid and Beattie. We never saw an abler defence of the doctrine of utility than in a book written in refutation of Shaftesbury, and now little read—Brown’s¹ “Essays on the Characteristics;” and in Johnson’s celebrated review of Soame Jenyns, the same doctrine is set forth as that both of the author and of the reviewer. In all ages of philosophy one of its schools has been utilitarian—not only from the time of Epicurus, but long before. It was by mere accident that this opinion became connected in Bentham with his peculiar method. The utilitarian philosophers antecedent to him had no more claims to the method than their antagonists. To refer, for instance, to the Epicurean philosophy, according to the

¹ Author of another book which made no little sensation when it first appeared, “An Estimate of the Manners of the Times.”

most complete view we have of the moral part of it, by the most accomplished scholar of antiquity, Cicero ; we ask any one who has read his philosophical writings, the “De Finibus” for instance, whether the arguments of the Epicureans are not as perfect a specimen of *σκιαμαχία* as those of the Stoics or Platonists, vague phrases which different persons may understand in different senses, and no person in any definite sense ; rhetorical appeals to common notions, to *εἰκότα* and *σημεῖα* instead of *τεκμήρια*, notions never narrowly looked into, and seldom exactly true, or true at all in the sense necessary to support the conclusion of any systematic appeal to fact and experience which might seem to be their peculiar province, the Epicurean moralists are as devoid as any of the other schools ; they never take a question to pieces, and join issue on a definite point. Bentham certainly did not learn his sifting and anatomizing method from them.

This method Bentham has finally installed in philosophy ; has made it henceforth imperative on philosophers of all schools. By it he has formed the intellects of many thinkers, who either never adopted, or have abandoned, most of his peculiar opinions. He has taught the method to men of the most opposite schools to his ; he has made them perceive that if they do not test their doctrines by the method of detail, their adversaries will. He has thus, it is not too much to say, for the first time introduced precision of thought into moral and political philosophy. Instead of taking up their opinions by intuition, or by ratiocination from premises adopted on a mere rough view, and couched in language so vague that it is impossible to say exactly whether they are true or false, philosophers are now forced to understand one another, to break down the generality of their propositions, and join a precise issue in every dispute. This is nothing less than a revolution in philosophy. Its effect is gradually becoming evident in

the writings of English thinkers of every variety of opinion, and will be felt more and more in proportion as Bentham's writings are diffused, and as the number of minds to whose formation they contribute is multiplied.

It will naturally be presumed that of the fruits of this great philosophical improvement some portion at least will have been reaped by its author. Armed with such a potent instrument, and wielding it with such singleness of aim; cultivating the field of practical philosophy with such unwearied and such consistent use of a method right in itself, and not adopted by his predecessors; it cannot be but that Bentham by his own inquiries must have accomplished something considerable. And so, it will be found, he has; something not only considerable, but extraordinary; though but little compared with what he has left undone, and far short of what his sanguine and almost boyish fancy made him flatter himself that he had accomplished. His peculiar method, admirably calculated to make clear thinkers, and sure ones to the extent of their materials, has not equal efficacy for making those materials complete. It is a security for accuracy, but not for comprehensiveness; or rather, it is a security for one sort of comprehensiveness, but not for another.

It is not to be denied that Bentham's method of laying out his subject is admirable as a preservative against one kind of narrow and partial views. He begins by placing before himself the whole of the field of inquiry to which the particular question belongs, and divides down till he arrives at the thing he is in search of; and thus by successively rejecting all which is not the thing, he gradually works out a definition of what it is. This, which he calls the exhaustive method, is as old as philosophy itself. Plato owes everything to it, and does everything by it; and the use made of it by that great man in his Dialogues, Bacon,

in one of those pregnant logical hints scattered through his writings, and so much neglected by most of his pretended followers, pronounces to be the nearest approach to a true inductive method in the ancient philosophy. Bentham was little aware that Plato had anticipated him in the process to which he too declared that he owed everything. By the practice of it, his speculations are rendered eminently systematic and consistent; no question, with him, is ever an insulated one; he sees every subject in connection with all the other subjects with which in his view it is related, and from which it requires to be distinguished; and as all that he knows, in the least degree allied to the subject, has been marshalled in an orderly manner before him, he does not, like people who use a looser method, forget and overlook a thing on one occasion to remember it on another. Hence there is probably no philosopher of so wide a range, in whom there are so few inconsistencies. If any of the truths which he did not see, had come to be seen by him, he would have remembered it everywhere and at all times, and would have adjusted his whole system to it. And this is another admirable quality which he has impressed upon the best of the minds trained in his habits of thought: when those minds do open to admit new truths, they digest them as fast as they receive them.

But this system, excellent for keeping before the mind of the thinker all that he knows, does not make him know enough; it does not make a knowledge of some of the properties of a thing suffice for the whole of it, nor render a rooted habit of surveying a complex object (though ever so carefully) in only one of its aspects, tantamount to the power of contemplating it in all. To give this last power, other qualities are required: whether Bentham possessed those other qualities we have now to see.

Bentham's mind, as we have already said, was eminently synthetical. He begins all his inquiries by supposing ↓

{ nothing to be known on the subject, and reconstructs all ✓
 philosophy *ab initio*, without reference to the opinions of
 his predecessors. But to build either a philosophy or any-
thing else, there must be materials. For the philosophy of
 matter, the materials are the properties of matter; for
moral and political philosophy, the properties of man, and
of man's position in the world. The knowledge which any
 inquirer possesses of these properties, constitutes a limit
 beyond which, as a moralist or a political philosopher,
 whatever be his powers of mind, he cannot go. Nobody's
synthesis can be more complete than his analysis. If in
his survey of human nature and of human life he has left
any element out, then, wheresoever that element exerts
any influence, his conclusions will fail, more or less, in their
application. If he has left out many elements, and those
 very important, his labours may be highly valuable; he
 may have largely contributed to that body of partial truths
 which, when completed and corrected by one another, con-
 stitute practical truth; but the applicability of his system
 to practice in its own proper shape will be of an exceedingly
 limited range.

• Human nature and human life are wide subjects, and
 whoever would embark in an enterprise requiring a thorough
 knowledge of them, has need both of large stores of his
 own, and of all aids and appliances from elsewhere. His
qualifications for success will be proportional to two things: ✓
the degree in which his own nature and circumstances,
furnish him with a correct and complete picture of man's
nature and circumstances; and his capacity of deriving
light from other minds. ✕

Bentham failed in deriving light from other minds. His ✓
 writings contain few traces of the accurate knowledge of
 any school of thinking but his own; and many proofs of
 his entire conviction that they could teach him nothing
 worth knowing. For some of the most illustrious of pre-

vious thinkers, his contempt was unmeasured. In almost the only passage of Bowring's "Deontology" which, from its style, and from its having before appeared in print, may be known to be Bentham's, Socrates and Plato are spoken of in terms distressing to his greatest admirers; and the incapacity to appreciate such men, is a fact perfectly in unison with the general habits of Bentham's mind. He had a phrase, expressive of the view he took of all moral speculations to which his method had not been applied, or (which he considered as the same thing) not founded on a recognition of utility as the moral standard; this phrase was "vague generalities." Whatever presented itself to him in such a shape, he dismissed as unworthy of notice, or dwelt upon only to denounce as absurd. He did not heed, or rather the nature of his mind prevented it from occurring to him, that these generalities contained the whole unanalyzed experience of the human race.

Unless it can be asserted that mankind did not know anything until logicians taught it to them—that until the last hand has been put to a moral truth by giving it a metaphysically precise expression, all the previous rough-hewing which it has undergone by the common intellect at the suggestion of common wants and common experience is to go for nothing; it must be allowed, that even the originality which can, and the courage which dares, think for itself, is not a more necessary part of the philosophical character than reverence for previous thinkers, and for the collective mind of the human race. What has been the opinion of mankind, has been the opinion of persons of all tempers and dispositions, of all partialities and prepossessions, of all varieties in position, in education, in opportunities of observation and inquiry. No one inquirer is all this; every inquirer is either young or old, rich or poor, sickly or healthy, married or single, meditative or active, a poet or a logician, an ancient or a modern, a man or a woman;

and if a thinking person, has, in addition, the accidental peculiarities of his individual modes of thought. Every circumstance which gives a character to the life of a human being, carries with it its peculiar biases; its peculiar facilities for perceiving some things, and for missing or forgetting others. But, from points of view different from his, different things are perceptible; and none are so likely to have seen what he does not see, as those who do not see what he sees. The general opinion of mankind is the average of the conclusions of all minds, stripped indeed of their choicest and most recondite thoughts, but freed from their twists and partialities: a net result, in which everybody's particular point of view is represented, nobody's predominant. The collective mind does not penetrate below the surface, but it sees all the surface; which profound thinkers, even by reason of their profundity, seldom do: their intenser view of a thing in some of its aspects diverting their attention from others.

The hardest assertor, therefore, of the freedom of private judgment—the keenest detector of the errors of his predecessors, and of the inaccuracies of current modes of thought—is the very person who most needs to fortify the weak side of his own intellect, by a study of the opinions of mankind in all ages and nations, and of the speculations of philosophers of the modes of thought most opposite to his own. It is there that he will find the experiences denied to himself—the remainder of the truth of which he sees but half—the truths, of which the errors he detects are commonly but the exaggerations. If, like Bentham, he brings with him an improved instrument of investigation, the greater is the probability that he will find ready prepared a rich abundance of rough ore, which was merely waiting for that instrument. A man of clear ideas errs grievously if he imagines that whatever is seen confusedly does not exist: it belongs to him, when he meets with such

a thing, to dispel the mist, and fix the outlines of the dim vague form which is looming through it.

Bentham's contempt, then, of all other schools of thinkers; his determination to create a philosophy wholly out of the materials furnished by his own mind, and by minds like his own; was his first disqualification as a philosopher. His second, was the incompleteness of his own mind as a representative of universal human nature. In many of the most natural and strongest feelings of human nature he had no sympathy; from many of its graver experiences he was altogether cut off; and the faculty by which one mind understands a mind different from itself, and throws itself into the feelings of that other mind, was denied him by his deficiency of Imagination.

With Imagination in the popular sense, command of imagery and metaphorical expression, Bentham was, to a certain degree, endowed. For want, indeed, of poetical culture, the images with which his fancy supplied him were seldom beautiful, but they were quaint and humorous, or bold, forcible, and intense: passages might be quoted from him both of playful irony, and of declamatory eloquence, seldom surpassed in the writings of philosophers. The Imagination which he had not, was that to which the name is generally appropriated by the best writers of the present day; that which enables us, by a voluntary effort, to conceive the absent as if it were present, the imaginary as if it were real, and to clothe it in the feelings which, if it were indeed real, it would bring along with it. This is the power by which one human being enters into the mind and circumstances of another. This power constitutes the poet, in so far as he does anything but melodiously utter his own actual feelings. It constitutes the dramatist entirely. It is one of the constituents of the historian; by it we understand other times; by it Guizot interprets to us the middle ages;

Nisard, in his beautiful *Studies on the later Latin poets*, places us in the Rome of the Cæsars; Michelet disengages the distinctive characters of the different races and generations of mankind from the facts of their history. Without it nobody knows even his own nature, further than circumstances have actually tried it and called it out; nor the nature of his fellow-creatures, beyond such generalisations as he may have been enabled to make from his observation of their outward conduct.

By these limits, accordingly, Bentham's knowledge of human nature is bounded. It is wholly empirical; and the empiricism of one who has had little experience. He had neither internal experience nor external; the quiet, even tenor of his life, and his healthiness of mind, conspired to exclude him from both. He never knew prosperity and adversity, passion nor satiety: he never had even the experiences which sickness gives; he lived from childhood to the age of eighty-five in boyish health. He knew no dejection, no heaviness of heart. He never felt life a sore and a weary burthen. He was a boy to the last. Self-consciousness, that dæmon of the men of genius of our time, from Wordsworth to Byron, from Goethe to Chateaubriand, and to which this age owes most both of its cheerful and its mournful wisdom, never was awakened in him. How much of human nature slumbered in him he knew not, neither can we know. He had never been made alive to the unseen influences which were acting on himself, nor consequently on his fellow-creatures. Other ages and other nations were a blank to him for purposes of instruction. He measured them but by one standard; their knowledge of facts, and their capability to take correct views of utility, and merge all other objects in it. His own lot was cast in a generation of the leanest and barrenest men whom England had yet produced, and he was an old man when a better race came in with the pre-

sent century. He saw accordingly in man little but what the vulgarest eye can see; recognized no diversities of character but what he who runs may read. Knowing so little of human feelings, he knew still less of the influences by which those feelings are formed: all the more subtle workings both of the mind upon itself, and of external things upon the mind, escaped him; and no one, probably, who, in a highly instructed age, ever attempted to give a rule to all human conduct, set out with a more limited knowledge either of the things by which human conduct is, or of those by which it *should* be, influenced. ✓

This, then, is our idea of Bentham. He was a man both of remarkable endowments for philosophy, and of remarkable deficiencies for it: fitted, beyond almost any man, for drawing from his premises, conclusions not only correct, but sufficiently precise and specific to be practical: but whose general conception of human nature and life, furnished him with an unusually slender stock of premises. It is obvious what would be likely to be achieved by such a man; what a thinker, thus gifted and thus disqualified, could be in philosophy. He could be a systematic and accurately logical half-man; hunting half-truths to their consequences and practical applications, on a scale both of greatness and of minuteness not previously exemplified: and this is the character which posterity will probably assign to Bentham.

We express our sincere and well-considered conviction when we say, that there is hardly anything positive in Bentham's philosophy which is not true: that when his practical conclusions are erroneous, which in our opinion they are very often, it is not because the considerations which he urges are not rational and valid in themselves, but because some more important principle, which he did not perceive, supersedes those considerations, and turns the scale. The bad part of his writings is his resolute denial

of all that he does not see, of all truths but those which he recognises. By that alone has he exercised any bad influence upon his age; by that he has, not created a school of deniers, for this is an ignorant prejudice, but put himself at the head of the school which exists always, though it does not always find a great man to give it the sanction of philosophy: thrown the mantle of intellect over the natural tendency of men in all ages to deny the existence of all spiritual influences of which they have no consciousness in themselves.

The truths which are not Bentham's, which his philosophy takes no account of, are many and important; but his non-recognition of them does not put them out of existence; they are still with us, and it is a comparatively easy task that is reserved for us, to harmonize these truths with his. To reject his half of the truth because he overlooked the other half, would be to fall into his error without having his excuse. For our own part, we have a large tolerance for one-eyed men, provided their one eye is a penetrating one: if they saw more, they probably would not see so keenly, nor so eagerly pursue one course of inquiry. Almost all rich veins of original and striking speculation have been opened by systematic half-minds: though whether these new thoughts drive out others as good, or are peacefully superadded to them, depends on whether these half-minds are or are not followed in the same track by complete minds. The field of man's nature and life cannot be too much worked, or in too many directions; until every clod is turned up the work is imperfect; no whole truth is possible but by combining the points of view of all the fractional truths, nor, therefore, until it has been fully seen what each fractional truth can do by itself.

What Bentham's fractional truths could do, there is no such good means of showing as by a review of his philo-

sophy: and such a review, though inevitably a most brief and general one, it is now necessary to attempt. V

The first question in regard to any man of speculation is, what is his theory of human life? In the minds of many philosophers, whatever theory they have of this sort is latent, and it would be a revelation to themselves to have it pointed out to them in their writings as others can see it, unconsciously moulding everything to its own likeness. But Bentham always knew his own premises, and made his reader know them: it was not his custom to leave the theoretic grounds of his practical conclusions to conjecture. Few great thinkers have afforded the means of assigning with so much certainty the exact conception which they had formed of man and of man's life.

Man is conceived by Bentham as a being susceptible of pleasures and pains, and governed in all his conduct partly by the different modifications of self-interest, and the passions commonly classed as selfish, partly by sympathies, or occasionally antipathies, towards other beings. And here Bentham's conception of human nature stops. He does not, indeed, exclude religion; the prospect of divine rewards and punishments he includes under the head of "self-regarding interest," and the devotional feeling under that of sympathy towards God. But the whole of the impelling or restraining principles, whether of this world or the next which he recognizes, are either self-love, or love or hatred towards other beings. That there might be no doubt of what he thought on the subject, he has not left us to the general evidence of his writings, but has drawn out a "Table of the Springs of Action," an express enumeration and classification of human motives, with their various names, laudatory, vituperative, and neutral: and this table to be found in Part I. of the present publication,¹ we re-

¹ That is, the collected works of Bentham.—ED.

commend to the study of those who would understand his philosophy. ✓

Man is never recognised by him as a being capable of pursuing spiritual perfection as an end; of desiring, for its own sake, the conformity of his own character to his standard of excellence, without hope of good or fear of evil from other source than his own inward consciousness. Even in the more limited form of Conscience, this great fact in human nature escapes him. Nothing is more curious than the absence of recognition in any of his writings of the existence of conscience, as a thing distinct from philanthropy, from affection for God or man, and from self-interest in this world or in the next. There is a studied abstinence from any of the phrases which, in the mouths of others, import the acknowledgment of such a fact.¹ If we find the words, "Conscience," "Principle," "Moral Rectitude," "Moral Duty," in his Table of the Springs of Action, it is among the synonymes of the "love of reputation"; with an intimation as to the two former phrases, that they are also sometimes synonymous with the *religious* motive, or the motive of *sympathy*. The feeling of moral approbation or disapprobation properly so called, either towards ourselves or our fellow-creatures, he seems unaware of the existence of; and neither the word *self-respect*, nor the idea to which that word is appropriated, occurs even once, so far as our recollection serves us, in his whole writings.

Nor is it only the moral part of man's nature, in the strict sense of the term—the desire of perfection, or the

¹ In a passage in the last volume of his book on Evidence, and possibly in one or two other places, the "love of justice" is spoken of as a feeling inherent in almost all mankind. It is impossible, without explanations, now unattainable, to ascertain what sense is to be put upon casual expressions so inconsistent with the general tenor of his philosophy. [The "book on Evidence" formed the two volumes of the Collected Works which Mill himself so laboriously edited in 1826-7.—ED.]

feeling of an approving or of an accusing conscience—that he overlooks ; he but faintly recognizes, as a fact in human nature, the pursuit of any other ideal end for its own sake. The sense of *honour*, and personal dignity—that feeling of personal exaltation and degradation which acts independently of other people's opinion, or even in defiance of it ; the love of *beauty*, the passion of the artist ; the love of *order*, of congruity, of consistency in all things, and conformity to their end ; the love of *power*, not in the limited form of power over other human beings, but abstract power, the power of making our volitions effectual ; the love of *action*, the thirst for movement and activity, a principle scarcely of less influence in human life than its opposite, the love of ease :—None of these powerful constituents of human nature are thought worthy of a place among the “ Springs of Action ; ” and though there is possibly no one of them of the existence of which an acknowledgment might not be found in some corner of Bentham's writings, no conclusions are ever founded on the acknowledgment. Man, that most complex being, is a very simple one in his eyes. Even under the head of *sympathy*, his recognition does not extend to the more complex forms of the feeling—the love of *loving*, the need of a sympathising support, or of an object of admiration and reverence. If he thought at all of any of the deeper feelings of human nature, it was but as idiosyncracies of taste, with which neither the moralist nor the legislator had any concern, further than to prohibit such as were mischievous among the actions to which they might chance to lead. To say either that man should, or that he should not, take pleasure in one thing, displeasure in another, appeared to him as much an act of despotism in the moralist, as in the political ruler.

It would be most unjust to Bentham to surmise (as narrow-minded and passionate adversaries are apt in such

cases to do) that this picture of human nature was copied from himself; that all those constituents of humanity which he rejected from his table of motives, were wanting in his own breast. The unusual strength of his early feelings of virtue, was, as we have seen, the original cause of all his speculations; and a noble sense of morality, and especially of justice, guides and pervades them all. But having been early accustomed to keep before his mind's eye the happiness of mankind (or rather of the whole sentient world), as the only thing desirable in itself, or which rendered anything else desirable, he confounded all disinterested feelings which he found in himself, with the desire of general happiness: just as some religious writers, who loved virtue for its own sake as much perhaps as men could do, habitually confounded their love of virtue with their fear of hell. It would have required greater subtlety than Bentham possessed, to distinguish from each other, feelings which, from long habit, always acted in the same direction; and his want of imagination prevented him from reading the distinction, where it is legible enough, in the hearts of others.

Accordingly, he has not been followed in this grand oversight by any of the able men who, from the extent of their intellectual obligations to him, have been regarded as his disciples. They may have followed him in his doctrine of utility, and in his rejection of the moral sense as a test of right and wrong: but while repudiating it as such, they have, with Hartley, acknowledged it as a fact in human nature; they have endeavoured to account for it, to assign its laws: nor are they justly chargeable either with undervaluing this part of our nature, or with any disposition to throw it into the background of their speculations. If some part of the influence of this cardinal error has extended itself to them, it is circuitously, and through the effect on their minds of other parts of Bentham's doctrines.

Sympathy, the only disinterested motive which Bentham recognized, he felt the inadequacy of, except in certain limited cases, as a security for virtuous action. Personal affection, he well knew, is as liable to operate to the injury of third parties, and requires as much to be kept in check, as any other feeling whatever: and general philanthropy, considered as a motive influencing mankind in general, he estimated at its true value when divorced from the feeling of duty—as the very weakest and most unsteady of all feelings. There remained, as a motive by which mankind are influenced, and by which they may be guided to their good, only personal interest. Accordingly, Bentham's idea of the world is that of a collection of persons pursuing each his separate interest or pleasure, and the prevention of whom from jostling one another more than can be helped, must be attempted by hopes and fears derived from three sources—the law, religion, and public opinion. To these three powers, considered as binding human conduct, he gave the name of *sanctions*: the *political* sanction, operating by the rewards and penalties of the law; the *religious* sanction, by those expected from the Ruler of the Universe; and the *popular*, which he characteristically calls also the *moral* sanction, operating through the pains and pleasures arising from the favour or disfavour of our fellow-creatures.

Such is Bentham's theory of the world. And now, in a spirit neither of apology nor of censure, but of calm appreciation, we are to inquire how far this view of human nature and life will carry any one:—how much it will accomplish in morals, and how much in political and social philosophy: what it will do for the individual, and what for society.

It will do nothing for the conduct of the individual, beyond prescribing some of the more obvious dictates of worldly prudence, and outward probity and beneficence. There is no need to expatiate on the deficiencies of a system of ethics which does not pretend to aid individuals in the

formation of their own character; which recognises no such wish as that of self-culture, we may even say no such power, as existing in human nature; and if it did recognize, would furnish little assistance to that grand duty of man, because it overlooks the existence of about half of the whole number of mental feelings which human beings are capable of, including all those of which the direct objects are states of their own mind.

Morality consists of two parts. One of these is self-education; the training, by the human being himself, of his affections and will. That department is a blank in ~~in~~ Bentham's system. The other and co-equal part, the regulation of his outward actions, must be altogether halting and imperfect without the first; for how can we judge in what manner many an action will affect the worldly interests of ourselves or others, unless we take in, as part of the question, its influence on the regulation of our, or their, affections and desires? A moralist on Bentham's principles may get as far as this, that we ought not to slay, burn, or steal; but what will be his qualifications for regulating the nicer shades of human behaviour, or for laying down even the greater moralities as to those facts in human life which influence the depths of the character quite independently of any influence on worldly circumstances—such, for instance, as the sexual relations, or those of family in general, or any other social and sympathetic connexions of an intimate kind? The moralities of these questions depend on considerations of which Bentham not only was not a competent judge, but which he never even took into the account.

It is fortunate for the world that Bentham's taste lay rather in the direction of jurisprudential than of properly ethical inquiry. Nothing expressly of the latter kind has been published under his name, except the "Deontology"—a book scarcely ever alluded to by any admirer of ⁴
-ED.

Bentham without deep regret that it ever saw the light. We did not expect from Bentham correct systematic views of ethics, or a sound treatment of any question of moralities of which require a profound knowledge of the human heart; but we did expect that the greater moral questions would have been boldly plunged into, and at least a searching criticism produced of the received opinions; we did not expect that the *petite morale* almost alone would have been treated, and that with the most pedantic minuteness, and upon the *quid pro quo* principles which regulate *trade*. The book has not even the value which would belong to an authentic exhibition of the legitimate consequences of an erroneous line of thought; for the style proves it to have been so entirely rewritten, that it is impossible to tell how much or how little of it is Bentham's. The collected edition, now in progress, will not, it is said, include Bentham's religious writings; these, although we think them of exceedingly small value, are at least his, and the world has a right to whatever light they throw upon the constitution of his mind. But the omission of the "Deontology" would be an act of editorial discretion which we should deem entirely justifiable.¹

¹ The "editorial discretion" was exercised—whether in consequence of Mill's advice does not appear—and "Deontology" was not published in the after-coming volumes of Bentham's works. From the first Mill said this book was "Bowring's," as he says here (p. 346), rather than Bentham's. As published in 1834 the work is entitled, "Deontology, or the Science of Morality," "arranged and edited by John Bowring from Jeremy Bentham's MSS." In the list of works by Bowring at the end of the biography in the "Dict. Nat. Biog.," "Deontology" appears without any mention of Bentham; and in a list of Bowring's works, added to his "Autobiography," edited by Mr. Lewin B. Bowring, 1877, "Deontology" appears in the same way, though in Mr. Lewin Bowring's prefatory "Memoir" we are told that, "In 1834 he" (Dr. Bowring) "published a work called 'Bentham's Deontology,'" etc. Perhaps the truth is that "Deontology" became, through its editing by Bowring, a

If Bentham's theory of life can do so little for the individual, what can it do for society?

It will enable a society which has attained a certain state of spiritual development, and the maintenance of which in that state is otherwise provided for, to prescribe the rules by which it may protect its material interests. It will do nothing (except sometimes as an instrument in the hands of a higher principle) for the spiritual interests of society; nor does it suffice of itself even for the material interests. That which alone causes any material interests to exist, which alone enables any body of human beings to exist as a society, is national character: *that* it is, which causes one nation to succeed in all its attempts, another to fail; one nation to understand and aspire to elevated things, another to grovel in mean ones; which makes the greatness of one nation lasting, and dooms another to early and rapid decay. The true teacher of the fitting social arrangements for England, France, or America, is the one who can point out how the English, French, or American character can be improved, and how it has been made what it is. A philosophy of laws and institutions, not founded on a philosophy of national character, is an absurdity. But what could Bentham's opinion be worth on national character? How could he, whose mind contained so few and so poor types of individual character, rise to that higher generalization? All he can do is but to indicate means by which, in any given state of the national mind, the material interests of society can be protected; saving the question, of which others must judge, and not he, whether the use of those means would have, on the national character, any injurious influence.

We have arrived, then, at a sort of estimate of what a philosophy like Bentham's can do. It can teach the means joint work, just as the work on "Evidence," edited by Mill in 1826-7, may be said to be the joint work of Bentham and Mill.—ED.

of organizing and regulating the merely *business* part of the social arrangements. Whatever can be understood or whatever done without reference to moral influences, his philosophy is equal to; where those influences require to be taken into account, it is at fault. He committed the mistake of supposing that the *business* part of human affairs was the whole of them; all at least that the legislator and the moralist had to do with. Not that he disregarded moral influences when he perceived them; but his want of imagination, small experience of human feelings, and ignorance of the filiation and connection of feelings with one another, made this rarely the case.

The *business* part is accordingly the only province of human affairs which Bentham has cultivated with any success; into which he has introduced any considerable number of comprehensive and luminous practical principles. That is the field of his greatness; and there he is indeed great. He has swept away the accumulated cobwebs of centuries—he has untied knots which the efforts of the ablest thinkers, age after age, had only drawn tighter; and it is no exaggeration to say of him that over a great part of the field he was the first to shed the light of reason.

We turn with pleasure from what Bentham could not do, to what he did. It is an ungracious task to call a great benefactor of mankind to account for not being a greater—to insist upon the errors of a man who has originated more new truths, has given to the world more sound practical lessons, than it ever received, except in a few glorious instances, from any other individual. The unpleasing part of our work is ended. We are now to show the greatness of the man; the grasp which his intellect took of the subjects with which it was fitted to deal; the giant's task which was before him, and the hero's courage and hero's strength with which he achieved it. Nor let that which he

did be deemed of small account because its province was limited: man has but the choice to go a little way in many paths, or a great way in only one. The field of Bentham's labours was like the space between two parallel lines; narrow to excess in one direction, in another it reached to infinity.

Bentham's speculations, as we are already aware, began with law; and in that department he accomplished his greatest triumphs. He found the philosophy of law a chaos, he left it a science: he found the practice of the law an Augean stable, he turned the river into it which is mining and sweeping away mound after mound of its rubbish.

Without going into the exaggerated invectives against lawyers, which Bentham sometimes permitted himself, or making one portion of society alone accountable for the fault of all, we may say that circumstances had made English lawyers in a peculiar degree liable to the reproach of Voltaire, who defines lawyers the "conservators of ancient barbarous usages." The basis of the English law was, and still is, the feudal system. That system, like all those which existed as custom before they were established, as law, possessed a certain degree of suitableness to the wants of the society among whom it grew up—that is to say, of a tribe of rude soldiers, holding a conquered people in subjection, and dividing its spoils among themselves. Advancing civilisation had, however, converted this armed encampment of barbarous warriors in the midst of enemies reduced to slavery, into an industrious, commercial, rich and free people. The laws which were suitable to the first of these states of society, could have no manner of relation to the circumstances of the second: which could not even have come into existence unless something had been done to adapt those laws to it. But the adaptation was not

result of thought and design ; it arose not from any comprehensive consideration of the new state of society and its exigencies. What was done, was done by a struggle of centuries between the old barbarism and the new civilization ; between the feudal aristocracy of conquerors, holding fast to the rude system they had established, and the conquered effecting their emancipation. The last was the growing power, but was never strong enough to break its bonds, though ever and anon some weak point gave way. Hence the law came to be like the costume of a full-grown man who had never put off the clothes made for him when he first went to school. Band after band had burst, and, as the rent widened, then, without removing anything except what might drop off of itself, the hole was darned, or patches of fresh law were brought from the nearest shop and stuck on. Hence all ages of English history have given one another *rendezvous* in English law ; their several products may be seen all together, not interfused, but heaped one upon another, as all ages of the earth may be read in some perpendicular section of its surface—the deposits of each successive period not substituted but superimposed on those of the preceding. And in the world of law no less than in the physical world, every commotion and conflict of the elements has left its mark behind in some break or irregularity of the strata : every struggle which ever rent the bosom of society is apparent in the disjointed condition of the part of the field of law which covers the spot : nay, the very traps and pitfalls which one contending party set for another are still standing, and the teeth not of hyenas only, but of foxes and all cunning animals, are imprinted on the curious remains found in these antediluvian caves.

In the English law, as in the Roman before it, the adaptations of barbarous laws to the growth of civilized society were made chiefly by stealth. They were generally

made by the courts of justice, who could not help reading the new wants of mankind in the cases between man and man which came before them; but who, having no authority to make new laws for those new wants, were obliged to do the work covertly, and evade the jealousy and opposition of an ignorant, prejudiced, and for the most part brutal and tyrannical legislature. Some of the most necessary of these improvements, such as the giving force of law to *trusts*, and the breaking up of *entails*, were effected in actual opposition to the strongly-declared will of Parliament, whose clumsy hands, no match for the astuteness of judges, could not, after repeated trials, manage to make any law which the judges could not find a trick for rendering inoperative. The whole history of the contest about trusts may still be read in the words of a conveyance, as could the contest about entails, till the abolition of fine and recovery by a bill of the present Attorney-General; but dearly did the client pay for the cabinet of historical curiosities which he was obliged to purchase every time that he made a settlement of his estate. The result of this mode of improving social institutions was, that whatever new things were done had to be done in consistency with old forms and names; and the laws were improved with much the same effect as if, in the improvement of agriculture, the plough could only have been introduced by making it look like a spade; or as if, when the primeval practice of ploughing by the horse's tail gave way to the innovation of harness, the tail, for form's sake, had still remained attached to the plough.

When the conflicts were over, and the mixed mass settled down into something like a fixed state, and that state a very profitable and therefore a very agreeable one to lawyers, they, following the natural tendency of the human mind, began to theorise upon it, and, in obedience to necessity, had to digest it and give it a systematic form.

It was from this thing of shreds and patches, in which the only part that approached to order or system was the early barbarous part, now more than half superseded, that English lawyers had to construct, by induction and abstraction, their philosophy of law; and without the logical habits and general intellectual cultivation which the lawyers of the Roman empire brought to a similar task. Bentham found the philosophy of law what English practising lawyers had made it; a mess, in which *real* and *personal* property, *law* and *equity*, *felony*, *præmunire*, *misprision*, and *mis-demeanour*, words without a vestige of meaning when detached from the history of English institutions—mere tide-marks to point out the line which the sea and the shore, in their secular struggles, had adjusted as their mutual boundary—all passed for distinctions inherent in the nature of things; in which every absurdity, every lucrative abuse, had a reason found for it—a reason which only now and then even pretended to be drawn from expediency; most commonly a technical reason, one of mere form, derived from the old barbarous system. While the theory of the law was in this state, to describe what the practice of it was would require the pen of a Swift, or of Bentham himself. The whole progress of a suit at law seemed like a series of contrivances for lawyers' profit, in which the suitors were regarded as the prey; and if the poor were not the helpless victims of every Sir Giles Overreach who could pay the price, they might thank opinion and manners for it, not the law. ✓

It may be fancied by some people that Bentham did an easy thing in merely calling all this absurd, and proving it to be so. But he began the contest a young man, and he had grown old before he had any followers. History will one day refuse to give credit to the intensity of the superstition which, till very lately, protected this mischievous mess from examination or doubt—passed off the charming

representations of Blackstone for a just estimate of the English law, and proclaimed the shame of human reason to be the perfection of it. Glory to Bentham that he has dealt to this superstition its deathblow—that he has been the Hercules of this hydra, the St. George of this pestilent dragon! The honour is all his—nothing but his peculiar qualities could have done it. There were wanted his indefatigable perseverance, his firm self-reliance, needing no support from other men's opinion; his intensely practical turn of mind, his synthetical habits—above all, his peculiar method. Metaphysicians, armed with vague generalities, had often tried their hands at the subject, and left it no more advanced than they found it. Law is a matter of business: means and ends are the things to be considered in it, not abstractions: vagueness was not to be met by vagueness, but by definiteness and precision: details were not to be encountered with generalities, but with details. Nor could any progress be made, on such a subject, by merely showing that existing things were bad; it was necessary also to show how they might be made better. No great man whom we read of was qualified to do this thing except Bentham. He has done it, once and for ever: [witness these volumes, and the others by which they are to be followed.]

Into the details of what Bentham has done we cannot enter: many hundred pages would be required to give a tolerable abstract of it. To sum up our estimate under a few heads. First: He has expelled mysticism from the philosophy of law, and set the example of viewing laws in a practical light, as means to certain definite and precise ends. Secondly: He has cleared up the confusion and vagueness attaching to the idea of law in general, to the idea of a body of laws, and all general ideas therein involved. Thirdly: He demonstrated the necessity and practicability of codification, or the conversion of all law

into a written and systematically arranged code: not like the Code Napoleon, a code without a single definition, requiring a constant reference to anterior precedent for the meaning of all its technical terms; but a code containing within itself all that is necessary for its own interpretation, together with a perpetual provision for its own emendation and improvement. He has shewn of what parts such a code would consist; the relation of those parts to one another; and by his distinctions and classifications has done very much towards showing what should be, or might be, its nomenclature and arrangement. What he has left undone, he has made it comparatively easy for others to do. Fourthly: He has taken a systematic view¹ of the exigencies of society for which the civil code is intended to provide, and of the principles of human nature by which its provisions are to be tested: and this view, defective (as we have already intimated) wherever spiritual interests require to be taken into account, is excellent for that large portion of the laws of any country which are designed for the protection of material interests. Fifthly: (to say nothing of the subject of punishment, for which something considerable had been done before) he found the philosophy of judicial procedure, including that of judicial establishments and of evidence, in a more wretched state than even any other part of the philosophy of law; he carried it at once almost to perfection. He left it with every one of its principles established, and little remaining to be done even in the suggestion of practical arrangements.

These assertions in behalf of Bentham may be left, and now without fear for the result, in the hands of those who are competent to judge of them. There are even in the highest seats of justice, men to whom the claims made for him will not now appear extravagant. Principle after

¹ See the "Principles of Civil Law," contained in Part II. of the present publication.

principle of those propounded by him is moreover making its way by infiltration into the understandings most shut against his influence, and driving nonsense and prejudice from one corner of them to another. The reform of the laws of any country according to his principles, can only be gradual, and may be long ere it is accomplished ; but the work is in progress, and both parliament and the judges are every year doing something, and often something not inconsiderable, towards the forwarding of it.

It seems proper here to take notice of an accusation sometimes made both against Bentham and against the principle of codification—as if they required one uniform suit of ready-made laws for all times and all states of society. The doctrine of codification, as the word imports, relates to the form only of the laws, not their substance ; it does not concern itself with what the laws should be, but declares that whatever they are, they ought to be systematically arranged, and fixed down to a determinate form of words. To the accusation, so far as it affects Bentham, one of the essays in the present collection (now for the first time published in English) is a complete answer : that “ On the Influence of Time and Place in Matters of Legislation.” It may there be seen that the different exigencies of different nations with respect to law, occupied his attention as systematically as any other portion of the wants which render laws necessary : with the limitations, it is true, which were set to all his speculations by the imperfections of his theory of human nature. For, taking, as we have seen, next to no account of national character and the causes which form and maintain it, he was precluded from considering, except to a very limited extent, the laws of a country as an instrument of national culture : one of their most important aspects, and in which they must of course vary according to the degree and kind of culture already attained ; as a tutor gives his

pupil different lessons according to the progress already made in his education. The same laws would not have suited our wild ancestors, accustomed to rude independence, and a people of Asiatics bowed down by military despotism: the slave needs to be trained to govern himself, the savage to submit to the government of others. The same laws will not suit the English, who place their habitual reliance in themselves, and the French, who place theirs in leaders. Very different institutions are needed to train to the perfection of their nature, or to constitute into a united nation and social polity, an essentially *subjective* people like the North Germans, and an essentially *objective* people like those of Northern and Central Italy; the one affectionate and dreamy, the other passionate and worldly; the one trustful and loyal, the other calculating and suspicious; the one not practical enough, the other overmuch; the one wanting individuality, the other fellow-feeling; the one failing for want of exacting enough for itself, the other for want of conceding enough to others. Bentham was little accustomed to look at institutions in their relation to these topics. The effects of this oversight must of course be perceptible throughout his speculations, but we do not think the errors into which it led him very material in the greater part of civil and penal law: it is in the department of constitutional legislation that they were fundamental.

The Benthamic theory of government has made so much noise in the world of late years; it has held such a conspicuous place among Radical philosophies, and Radical modes of thinking have participated so much more largely than any others in its spirit, that many worthy persons imagine there is no other Radical philosophy extant. Leaving such persons to discover their error as they may, we shall expend a few words in attempting to discriminate between the truth and error of this celebrated theory.

There are three great questions in government. First, to what authority is it for the good of the people that they should be subject? Secondly, how are they to be induced to obey that authority? The answers to these two questions vary indefinitely, according to the degree and kind of civilization and cultivation already attained by a people, and their peculiar aptitudes for receiving more. Comes next a third question, not liable to so much variation, namely, by what means are the abuses of this authority to be checked? This third question is the only one of the three to which Bentham seriously applies himself, and he gives it the only answer it admits of—Responsibility: responsibility to persons whose interest, whose obvious and recognizable interest, accords with the end in view—good government. This being granted, it is next to be asked, in what body of persons this identity of interest with good government, that is, with the interest of the whole community, is to be found? In nothing less, says Bentham, than the numerical majority: nor, say we, even in the numerical majority itself; of no portion of the community less than all, will the interest coincide, at all times and in all respects, with the interest of all. But, since power given to all, by a representative government, is in fact given to a majority; we are obliged to fall back upon the first of our three questions, namely, under what authority is it for the good of the people that they be placed? And if to this the answer be, under that of a majority among themselves, Bentham's system cannot be questioned. This one assumption being made, his "Constitutional Code" is admirable. That extraordinary power which he possessed, of at once seizing comprehensive principles, and scheming out minute details, is brought into play with surpassing vigour in devising means for preventing rulers from escaping from the control of the majority; for enabling and inducing the majority to exercise that control unre-

mittingly ; and for providing them with servants of every desirable endowment, moral and intellectual, compatible with entire subservience to their will.

But *is* this fundamental doctrine of Bentham's political philosophy an universal truth ? Is it, at all times and places, good for mankind to be under the absolute authority of the majority of themselves ? We say the *authority*, not the *political* authority merely, because it is chimerical to suppose that whatever has absolute power over men's bodies will not arrogate it over their minds, will not seek to control (not perhaps by legal penalties, but by the persecutions of society) opinions and feelings which depart from its standard ; will not attempt to shape the education of the young by its own model, and to extinguish all books, all schools, all combinations of individuals for joint action upon society, which may be attempted for the purpose of keeping alive a spirit at variance with its own. Is it, we say, the proper condition of man, in all ages and nations, to be under the despotism of Public Opinion ?

It is very conceivable that such a doctrine should find acceptance from some of the noblest spirits, in a time of reaction against the aristocratic governments of modern Europe ; governments founded upon the entire sacrifice (except so far as prudence, and sometimes humane feeling interfere) of the community generally, to the self-interest and ease of a few. European reformers have been accustomed to see the numerical majority everywhere unjustly depressed, everywhere trampled upon, or at the best overlooked, by governments ; nowhere possessing power enough to extort redress of their most positive grievances, provision for their mental culture, or even to prevent themselves from being taxed avowedly for the pecuniary profit of the ruling classes. To see these things and to seek to put an end to them, by means (among other things) of giving more political power to the majority

constitutes Radicalism; and it is because so many in this age have felt this wish, and have felt that the realization of it was an object worthy of men's devoting their lives to it, that such a theory of Government as Bentham's has found favour with them. But, though to pass from one form of bad government to another be the ordinary fate of mankind, philosophers ought not to make themselves parties to it, by sacrificing one portion of important truth to another.

The numerical majority of any society whatever, must consist of persons all standing in the same social position, and having, in the main, the same pursuits, namely, unskilled manual labourers: and we mean no disparagement to them: whatever we say to their disadvantage, we say equally of a numerical majority of shopkeepers, or of squires. Where there is identity of position and pursuits, there also will be identity of partialities, passions, and prejudices; and to give to any *one* set of partialities, passions, and prejudices, absolute power, without counterbalance from partialities, passions, and prejudices of a different sort, is the way to render the correction of any of those imperfections hopeless; to make one narrow, mean type of human nature universal and perpetual, and to crush every influence which tends to the further improvement of man's intellectual and moral nature. There must, we know, be some paramount power in society; and that the majority should be that power, is on the whole right, not as being just in itself, but as being less unjust than any other footing on which the matter can be placed. But it is necessary that the institutions of society should make provision for keeping up, in some form or other, as a corrective to partial views, and a shelter for freedom of thought and individuality of character, a perpetual and standing Opposition to the will of the majority. All countries which have long continued progressive, or been

durably great, have been so because there has been an organized opposition to the ruling power, of whatever kind that power was: plebeians to patricians, clergy to kings, freethinkers to clergy, kings to barons, commons to king and aristocracy. Almost all the greatest men who ever lived have formed part of such an Opposition. Wherever some such quarrel has not been going on—wherever it has been terminated by the complete victory of one of the contending principles, and no new contest has taken the place of the old—society has either been hardened into Chinese stationariness, or fallen into dissolution. A centre of resistance, round which all the moral and social elements which the ruling power views with disfavour may cluster themselves, and behind those bulwarks they may find shelter from the attempts of that power to hunt them out of existence, is as necessary where the opinion of the majority is sovereign, as where the ruling power is a hierarchy or an aristocracy. Where no such *point d'appui* exists, there the human race will inevitably degenerate; and the question, whether the United States, for instance, will in time sink into another China (also a most commercial and industrious nation), resolves itself, to us, into the question, whether such a centre of resistance will gradually evolve itself or not.

These things being considered, we cannot think that Bentham made the most useful employment which might have been made of his great powers, when, not content with enthroning the majority as sovereign, by means of universal suffrage without king or house of lords, he exhausted all the resources of ingenuity in devising means for riveting the yoke of public opinion closer and closer round the necks of all public functionaries, and excluding every possibility of the exercise of the slightest or most temporary influence either by a minority, or by the functionary's own notions of right. Surely when you have

made a power the strongest power, you have done enough for it; your care is thenceforth wanted rather to prevent that strongest power from swallowing up all others. Wherever all the forces of society act in one single direction, there the rights of the individual human being are in extreme peril. The power of the majority is salutary so far as it is used *defensively*, not *offensively*—as its exertion is tempered by respect for the personality of the individual, and reverence for superiority of cultivated intelligence. If Bentham had employed himself in pointing out the means by which institutions fundamentally democratic might be best adapted to the preservation and strengthening of those two sentiments, he would have done something more permanently valuable, and more worthy of his great intellect. Montesquieu, with the lights of the present age, would have done it; and we are possibly destined to receive this benefit from the Montesquieu of our own times, M. de Tocqueville.¹

Do we then consider Bentham's political speculations useless? Far from it. We consider them only one-sided. He has brought out into a strong light, has cleared from a thousand confusions and misconceptions, and pointed out with admirable skill the best means of promoting, one of the ideal qualities of a perfect government—identity of interest between the trustees and the community for whom they hold their power in trust. This quality is not attainable in its ideal perfection, and must moreover be striven for with a perpetual eye to all other requisites; but those other requisites must still more be striven for without losing sight of this: and when the slightest postponement is made of it to any other end, the sacrifice, often necessary, is never unattended with evil. Bentham has pointed out

¹ Mill had read De Tocqueville's book upon "Democracy in America" in 1835; and he reviewed that work in the "Edinburgh Review" of October, 1840, the article being his first contribution

how complete this sacrifice is in modern European societies: how exclusively, partial and sinister interests are the ruling power there, with only such check as is imposed by public opinion—which being thus, in the existing order of things, perpetually apparent as a source of good, he was led by natural partiality to exaggerate its intrinsic excellence. This sinister interest of rulers Bentham hunted through all its disguises, and especially through those which hide it from the men themselves who are influenced by it. The greatest service rendered by him to the philosophy of universal human nature, is, perhaps, his illustration of what he terms “interest-begotten prejudice”—the inherent tendency of man to make a duty and a virtue of following his self-interest. The idea, it is true, was far from being peculiarly Bentham’s: the artifices by which we persuade ourselves that we are not yielding to our selfish inclinations when we are, had attracted the notice of all moralists, and had been probed by religious writers to a depth as much below Bentham’s, as their knowledge of the profundities and windings of the human heart was superior to his. But it is selfish interest in the form of class-interest, and the class morality founded thereon, which Bentham has illustrated: the manner in which any set of persons who mix much together, and have a common interest, are apt to make that common interest their standard of virtue, and the social feelings of the members of the class are made to play into the hands of their selfish ones; whence the union so often exemplified in history, between the most heroic personal disinterestedness and the most odious class-selfishness. This was one of Bentham’s leading ideas, and almost the only one by which he contributed to the elucidation of history: much of which, except so far as this explained it, must have been entirely to the “Edinburgh,” the organ of his and James Mill’s former antagonist, Macaulay. See note at p. 386.—ED.

inexplicable to him. The idea was given him by Helvetius, whose book, "De l'Esprit," is one continued and most acute commentary on it; and, together with the other great idea of Helvetius, the influence of circumstances on character, it will make his name live by the side of Rousseau, when all of the other French philosophers of the eighteenth century shall be extant as such only in literary history.

In the brief view which we have been able to give of Bentham's philosophy, it may surprise the reader that we have said so little about the first principle of it, with which his name is more identified than with anything else; the "principle of utility," or, as he afterwards named it, "the greatest-happiness principle." It is a topic on which much were to be said, if there were room, or if it were in reality necessary for the just estimation of Bentham. On an occasion more suitable for a discussion of the metaphysics of morality, or on which the explanations necessary to make an opinion on so abstract a subject intelligible could be conveniently given, we should be fully prepared to state what we think on this subject. [All we intend to say at present is, that we are much nearer in agreeing with Bentham in his principle, than in the degree of importance which he attached to it.] We think utility, or happiness, much too complex and indefinite an end to be sought except through the medium of various secondary ends, concerning which there may be, and often is, agreement among persons who differ in their ultimate standard; and about which there does in fact prevail a much greater unanimity among thinking persons, than might be supposed from their diametrical divergence on the great questions of moral metaphysics. As mankind are much more nearly of one nature, than of one opinion about their own nature, they are easily brought to agree in their intermediate principle *vera illa et media axiomata*, as Bacon says, than in th

first principles: and the attempt to make the bearings of actions upon the ultimate end more evident than they can be made by referring them to the intermediate ends, and to estimate their value by a direct reference to human happiness, generally terminates in attaching most importance, not to those effects which are really the greatest, but to those which can most easily be pointed to and individually identified. Those who adopt utility as a standard can seldom apply it truly except through the secondary principles; those who reject it, generally do no more than erect those secondary principles into first principles. We consider, therefore, the utilitarian controversy as a question of arrangement and logical subordination rather than of practice; important principally in a purely scientific point of view, for the sake of the systematic unity and coherency of ethical philosophy. [Whatever be our own opinion on the subject, it is from no such source that we look for the great improvements which we believe are destined to take place in ethical doctrine.] It is probable, however, that to the principle of utility we owe all that Bentham did; that it was necessary to him to find a first principle which he could receive as self-evident, and to which he could attach all his other doctrines as logical consequences: that to him systematic unity was an indispensable condition of his confidence in his own intellect. And there is something further to be remarked: whether happiness be or be not the end to which morality should be referred—that it be referred to an *end* of some sort, and not left in the dominion of vague feeling or inexplicable internal conviction, that it be made a matter of reason and calculation, and not merely of sentiment, is essential to the very idea of moral philosophy; is, in fact, what renders argument or discussion on moral questions possible. That the morality of actions depends upon the consequences which they tend to produce, the doctrine of rational persons of all schools; that the

good or evil of those consequences is measured solely by pleasure or pain, is all of the doctrine of the school of utility, which is peculiar to it.

In so far as Bentham's adoption of the principle of utility induced him to fix his attention upon the consequences of actions as the consideration determining their morality, so far at least he was in the right path: though to go far in it without wandering, there was needed a greater knowledge of the formation of character, and of the consequences of actions upon the agent's own frame of mind, than Bentham possessed. His want of power to estimate this class of consequences, together with his want of the degree of modest [respect (a far different thing to blind deference) due to the traditionary opinions and feelings in which the experience of mankind on that part of the subject lies embodied, render him, we conceive, a most unsafe guide] on questions of practical ethics.

He is chargeable also with another error, which it would be improper to pass over, because nothing has tended more to place him in opposition to the common feelings of mankind, and to give to his philosophy that cold, mechanical, and ungenial air which characterizes the popular idea of a Benthamite. This error, or rather one-sidedness, belongs to him not as a utilitarian, but as a moralist by profession, and in common with almost all professed moralists, whether religious or philosophical: it is that of treating the moral view of actions and characters, which is unquestionably the first and most important mode of looking at them, as if it were the sole one: whereas it is only one of three, by all of which our sentiments towards the human being may be, ought to be, and without entirely crushing our own nature cannot but be, materially influenced. Every human action has three aspects: its moral aspect, or that of its right and wrong; its æsthetic aspect, or that of its beauty; its sympathetic

aspect, or that of its *loveableness*. The first addresses itself to our reason and conscience: the second to our imagination; the third to our human fellow-feeling. According to the first, we approve or disapprove; according to the second, we admire or despise; according to the third, we love, pity, or dislike. The *morality* of an action depends on its foreseeable consequences; its beauty, and its loveableness, or the reverse, depend upon the qualities which it is evidence of. Thus, a lie is *wrong*, because its effect is to mislead, and because it tends to destroy the confidence of man in man; it is also *mean*, because it is cowardly—because it proceeds from not daring to face the consequences of telling the truth—or at best is evidence of want of that *power* to compass our ends by straightforward means, which is conceived as properly belonging to every person not deficient in energy or in understanding. The action of Brutus in sentencing his sons was *right*, because it was executing a law essential to the freedom of his country, against persons of whose guilt there was no doubt: it was *admirable*, because it evinced a rare degree of patriotism, courage, and self-control; but there was nothing *loveable* in it; it affords no presumption in regard to loveable qualities, unless a presumption of their deficiency. If one of the sons had engaged in the conspiracy from affection for the other, *his* action would have been loveable, though neither moral nor admirable. It is not possible for any sophistry to confound these three modes of viewing an action; but it is very possible to adhere to one of them exclusively, and lose sight of the rest. Sentimentality consists in setting the last two of the three above the first; the error of moralists in general, and of Bentham, is to sink the two latter entirely. This is pre-eminently the case with Bentham: he both wrote and felt as if the moral standard ought not only to be paramount (which it ought), but to be alone; as if it ought to

be the sole master of all our actions, and even of all our sentiments; as if either to admire or like, or despise or dislike a person for any action which neither does good nor harm, or which does not do a good or a harm proportioned to the sentiment entertained, were an injustice and a prejudice. He carried this so far, that there were certain phrases which, being expressive of what he considered to be this groundless liking or aversion, he could not bear to hear pronounced in his presence. Among these phrases were those of *good* and *bad taste*. He thought it an insolent piece of dogmatism in one person to praise or condemn another for a matter of taste: as if men's likings and dislikings, on things in themselves indifferent, were not pregnant with the most important inferences as to every point of their character; as if a person's tastes did not show him to be wise or a fool, cultivated or ignorant, gentle or rough, [polished or coarse,] sensitive or callous, generous or sordid, benevolent or selfish, conscientious or depraved.

Connected with the same topic are Bentham's peculiar opinions on poetry. Much has been said for which there is no foundation, about his contempt for the pleasures of imagination, and for the fine arts. Music was throughout life his favourite amusement; painting, sculpture, and the other arts addressed to the eye, he was so far from holding in any contempt, that he occasionally recognizes them as means employable for important social ends; though his ignorance of the deeper springs of human character prevented him from suspecting how profoundly such things enter into the moral nature of man, and into the education both of the individual and of the race. But towards poetry in the narrower sense, that which employs the language of words, he entertained no favour. Words, he thought, were perverted from their proper office when they were employed in uttering anything but precise logical

truth. He says, somewhere in his works, that, "quantity of pleasure being equal, push-pin is as good as poetry": but this is only a paradoxical way of stating what he would equally have said of the things which he most valued and admired. Another aphorism is attributed to him, which is much more characteristic of his view of this subject: "All poetry is misrepresentation." Poetry, he thought, consisted essentially in exaggeration for effect: in proclaiming some one view of a thing very emphatically, and suppressing all the limitations and qualifications. This trait of character seems to us a curious example of what Mr. Carlyle strikingly calls "the completeness of limited men." Here is a philosopher who is happy within his narrow boundary as no man of indefinite range ever was—who flatters himself that he is so completely emancipated from the essential law of poor human intellect, by which it can only see one thing at a time well, that he can even turn round upon the imperfection and lay a solemn interdict upon it. Did Bentham really suppose that it is in *poetry* only that propositions cannot be exactly true, cannot contain in themselves all the limitations and qualifications with which they require to be taken when applied to practice? We have seen how far his own prose propositions are from realizing this Utopia: and even the attempt to approach to it would be incompatible not with poetry merely, but with oratory, and popular writing of every kind. Bentham's charge is true to the fullest extent; all writing which undertakes to make men *feel* truths as well as *see* them, does take up one point at a time, does seek to impress that, to drive that home, to make it sink into and colour the whole mind of the reader or hearer. It is justified in doing so, if the portion of truth which it thus enforces be that which is called for by the occasion. All writing addressed to the feelings has a natural tendency to exaggeration; but Bentham should have remembered that

in this, as in many things, we must aim at too much, to be assured of doing enough.

From the same principle in Bentham came the intricate and involved style, which makes his later writings books for the student only, not the general reader. It was from his perpetually aiming at impracticable precision. Nearly all his earlier, and many parts of his later writings, are models, as we have already observed, of light, playful, and popular style ; a Benthamiana might be made of passages worthy of Addison or Goldsmith. But in his later years and more advanced studies, he fell into a Latin or German structure of sentence, foreign to the genius of the English language. He could not bear, for the sake of clearness and the reader's ease, to say, as ordinary men are content to do, a little more than the truth in one sentence, and correct it in the next. The whole of the qualifying remarks which he intended to make, he insisted upon imbedding as parentheses in the very middle of the sentence itself. And thus the sense being so long suspended, and attention being required to the accessory ideas before the principal idea had been properly seized, it became difficult, without some practice, to make out the train of thought. It is fortunate that so many of the most important parts of his writings are free from this defect. We regard it as a *reductio ad absurdum* of his objection to poetry. In trying to write in a manner against which the same objection should not lie, he could stop nowhere short of utter unreadableness, and after all attained no more accuracy than is compatible with opinions as imperfect and one-sided as those of any poet or sentimentalist breathing. Judge then in what state literature and philosophy would be, and what chance they would have of influencing the multitude, if his objection were allowed, and all styles of writing banished which would not stand his test.

We must here close this brief and imperfect view of

Bentham and his doctrines; in which many parts of the subject have been entirely untouched, and no part done justice to, but which at least proceeds from an intimate familiarity with his writings, and is, we believe, the first attempt at an impartial estimate of his character as a philosopher, and of the result of his labours to the world.

After every abatement, and it has been seen whether we have made our abatements sparingly—there remains to Bentham an indisputable place among the great intellectual benefactors of mankind. His writings will long form an indispensable part of the education of the highest order of practical thinkers; and the present collection of them ought to be in the hands of every one who would either understand his age, or take any beneficial part in the great business of it.

A.

APPENDICES TO THE FOREGOING ARTICLE.¹

(A.) DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNMENT.²

FROM this principle of the necessity of identifying the interest of the government with that of the people, most of the practical maxims of a representative government are corollaries. All popular institutions are means towards rendering the identity of interest more complete. We say *more* complete, because (and this it is important to remark) perfectly complete it can never be. An approximation is all that is, in the nature of things, possible. By pushing to its utmost extent the accountability of governments to the people, you indeed take away from them the power of prosecuting their own interests at the expense of the people by force, but you leave to them the whole range and compass of fraud. An attorney is accountable to his client, and removable at his client's pleasure; but we should scarcely say that his interest is identical with that of his client. When the accountability is perfect, the interest of rulers approximates more and more to identity with that of the people, in proportion as the people are more enlightened. The identity would be perfect, only if the people were so wise, that it should no longer be practicable to employ deceit as an instrument of government; a point of advancement only one stage below

¹ The following articles are reprinted as supplementary to the foregoing essay. The first was given by Mill himself, in a slightly condensed form, in his own reprint of the essay on Bentham.

² "London Review," July and October, 1835.

that at which they could do without government altogether ; at least, without force, and penal sanctions, not (of course) without guidance and organized co-operation.

Identification of interest between the rulers and the ruled, being therefore, in a literal sense, impossible to realized, must not be spoken of as a condition which a government must absolutely fulfil ; but as an end to be incessantly aimed at, and approximated to as nearly as circumstances render possible, and as is compatible with the regard due to other ends. For the identity of interest, even if it were wholly attainable, not being the sole requisite of good government, expediency may require that we should sacrifice some portion of it, or (to speak more precisely) content ourselves with a somewhat less approximation to it than might possibly be attainable, for the sake of some other end.

The only end, liable occasionally to conflict with that which we have been insisting on, and at all comparable to it in importance—the only other condition essential to good government—is this: That it be government by a select body, not by the public collectively : That political questions be not decided by an appeal, either direct or indirect, to the judgment or will of an uninstructed mass, whether of gentlemen or of clowns ; but by the deliberately formed opinions of a comparatively few, specially educated for the task. This is an element of good government which has existed, in a greater or less degree, in some aristocracies, though unhappily not in our own ; and has been the cause of whatever reputation for prudent and skilful administration those governments have enjoyed. It has seldom been found in any aristocracies but those which were avowedly such. Aristocracies in the guise of monarchies (such as those of England and France) have very generally been aristocracies of idlers ; while the others (such as Rome, Venice, and Holland) might partially be considered as aristocracies of experienced and laborious men. Of all governments, ancient or modern, the one by which this excellence is possessed in the most eminent degree is the government of Prussia—a most powerfully and skilfully organized aristocracy of the most highly-educated

men in the kingdom. The British government in India partakes (with considerable modifications) of the same character.

When this principle has been combined with other fortunate circumstances, and particularly (as in Prussia) with circumstances rendering the popularity of the government almost a necessary condition of its security, a very considerable degree of good government has occasionally been produced, even without any express accountability to the people. Such fortunate circumstances, however, are seldom to be reckoned upon. But though the principle of government by persons specially brought up to it will not suffice to produce good government, good government cannot be had without it; and the grand difficulty in politics will for a long time be, how best to conciliate the two great elements on which good government depends; to combine the greatest amount of the advantage derived from the independent judgment of a specially instructed Few, with the greatest degree of the security for rectitude of purpose derived from rendering those Few responsible to the Many.

What is necessary, however, to make the two ends perfectly reconcilable, is a smaller matter than might at first sight be supposed. It is not necessary that the many should themselves be perfectly wise; it is sufficient if they be duly sensible of the value of superior wisdom. It is sufficient if they be aware, that the majority of political questions turn upon considerations of which they, and all persons not trained for the purpose, must necessarily be very imperfect judges; and that their judgment must in general be exercised rather upon the characters and talents of the persons whom they appoint to decide these questions for them, than upon the questions themselves. They would then select as their representatives those whom the general voice of the instructed pointed out as the *most* instructed; and would retain them, so long as no symptom was manifested in their conduct, of being under the influence of interests or of feelings at variance with the public welfare. This implies no greater wisdom in the people than the very ordinary wisdom, of knowing what things they are and are

not sufficient judges of. If the bulk of any nation possess a fair share of this wisdom, the argument for universal suffrage, so far as respects that people, is irresistible; for the experience of ages, and especially of all great national emergencies, bears out the assertion, that whenever the multitude are really alive to the necessity of superior intellect, they rarely fail to distinguish those who possess it.

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The idea of a rational democracy is,¹ ^{not} that the people themselves govern, but they have *security* for good government. This security they cannot have by any other means than by retaining in their own hands the ultimate control. If they renounce this, they give themselves up to tyranny. A governing class not accountable to the people are sure, in the main, to sacrifice the people to the pursuit of separate interests and inclinations of their own. Even their feelings of morality, even their ideas of excellence, have reference, not to the good of the people, but to their own good; their very virtues are class virtues—their noblest acts of patriotism and self-devotion are but the sacrifice of their private interests to the interests of their class. The heroic public virtue of a Leonidas was quite compatible with the existence of Helots. In no government will the interests of the people be the object, except where the people are able to dismiss their rulers as soon as the devotion of those rulers to the interests of the people becomes questionable. But this is the only purpose for which it is good to entrust power to the people. Provided good intentions can be secured, the best government (need it be said?) must be the government of the wisest, and these must always be a few. The people ought to be the masters, but they are masters who must employ servants more skilful than themselves: like a ministry when they employ a military commander, or the military commander when he employs an army surgeon. When the minister

¹ This second extract is from Mill's review of De Tocqueville's "Democracy in America" which appeared in the "London Review" of October, 1835. A second review by him on the same book, on its translation into English, appeared in the "Edinburgh Review" of 1840.—ED.

ceases to confide in the commander, he dismisses him and appoints another; but he does not send him instructions when and where to fight. He holds him responsible only for results. The people must do the same. This does not render the control of the people nugatory. The control of a government over the commander of its army is not nugatory. A man's control over his physician is not nugatory, although he does not direct his physician what medicine to administer. [He either obeys the prescription of his physician, or, if dissatisfied with him, takes another. In that consists his security. In that consists also the people's security; and with that it is their wisdom to be satisfied.]

But in government, as in everything else, the danger is, lest those who can do whatever they will, may will to do more than is for their ultimate interest. The interest of the people is, to choose for their rulers the most instructed and the ablest persons who can be found; and having done so, to allow them to exercise their knowledge and ability for the good of the people freely, or with the least possible control—as long as it is the good of the people, and not some private end, that they are aiming at. A democracy thus administered would unite all the good qualities ever possessed by any government. Not only would its ends be good, but its means would be as well chosen as the wisdom of the age would allow; and the omnipotence of the majority would be exercised through the agency and at the discretion of an enlightened minority, accountable to the majority in the last resort.

But it is not possible that the constitution of the democracy itself should provide adequate security for its being understood and administered in this spirit. This rests with the good sense of the people themselves. If the people can remove their rulers for one thing, they can for another. That ultimate control, without which they cannot have security for good government, may, if they please, be made the means of themselves interfering in the government, and making their legislators mere delegates for carrying into execution the preconceived judgment of the majority. If the people do this, they mistake their

interest; and such a government, though better than most aristocracies, is not the kind of democracy which wise men desire.

Some persons, and persons too whose desire for enlightened government cannot be questioned, do not take so serious a view of this perversion of the true idea of an enlightened democracy as we do. They say, it is well that the many should evoke all political questions to their own tribunal, and decide them according to their own judgment, because then philosophers will be compelled to enlighten the multitude, and render them capable of appreciating their more profound views. No one can attach greater value than we do to this consequence of popular government, in so far as we believe it capable of being realized; and the argument would be irresistible, if, in order to instruct the people, all that is requisite were to will it; if it were only the *discovery* of political truths which required study and wisdom, and the evidence of them when discovered could be made apparent at once to any person of common sense, as well educated as every individual in the community might and ought to be. But the fact is not so. Many of the truths of politics (in political economy, for instance) are the result of a concatenation of propositions, the very first steps of which no one who has not gone through a course of study is prepared to concede; there are others, to have a complete perception of which requires much meditation, and experience of human nature. How will philosophers bring these home to the perceptions of the multitude? Can they enable common sense to judge of science, or inexperience of experience? Everyone who has even crossed the threshold of political philosophy knows, that on many of its questions the false view is greatly the most plausible; and a large portion of its truths are, and must always remain, to all but those who have specially studied them, paradoxes; as contrary, in appearance, to common sense, as the proposition that the earth moves round the sun. The multitude will never believe those truths, until tendered to them from an authority in which they have as unlimited confidence as they have in the unanimous voice of astronomers on a question of astronomy.

That they should have no such confidence at present is no discredit to them; for show us the men who are entitled to it? But we are well satisfied that it will be given, as soon as knowledge shall have made sufficient progress among the instructed classes themselves, to produce something like a general agreement in their opinions on the leading points of moral and political doctrine. Even now, on those points on which the instructed classes are agreed, the uninstructed have generally adopted their opinions.

(B.) REMARKS ON BENTHAM'S PHILOSOPHY.¹

(BY J. S. MILL AND BULWER-LYTTON.)

IT is no light task to give an abridged view of the philosophical opinions of one, who attempted to place the vast subjects of morals and legislation upon a scientific basis: a mere outline is all that can be attempted.

The first principles of Mr. Bentham's philosophy are these,—that happiness, meaning by that term pleasure and exemption from pain, is the only thing desirable in itself; that all other things are desirable solely as means to that end: that the production, therefore, of the greatest possible happiness, is the only fit purpose of all human thought and action, and consequently of all morality and government; and moreover, that pleasure and pain are the sole agencies by which the conduct of mankind is in fact governed, whatever circumstances the individual may be placed in, and whether he is aware of it or not.

Mr. Bentham does not appear to have entered very deeply into the metaphysical grounds of these doctrines; he seems to have taken those grounds very much upon the showing of the metaphysicians who preceded him. The principle of utility, or as he afterwards called it, "the greatest-happiness principle," stands no otherwise demonstrated in his writings, than by an enumeration of the

¹ This article was given in Bulwer-Lytton's (afterwards Lord Lytton) book of sketches called "England and the English," 1833. It is now first collected into Mill's works. In his preface to "England and the English," Mr. Bulwer, then in the height of his popularity as a novelist, and about to commence his career as a politician, says of the article that he had "considerable aid" in its compilation from "a gentleman qualified, perhaps before all men living, to judge profoundly of the philosophy of Bentham," *i.e.*, from J. S. Mill.—ED.

phrases of a different description which have been commonly employed to denote the rule of life, and the rejection of them all, as having no intelligible meaning, further than as they may involve a tacit reference to considerations of utility. Such are the phrases "law of nature," "right reason," "natural rights," "moral sense." All these Mr. Bentham regarded as mere covers for dogmatism; excuses for setting one's own *ipse dixit* as a rule to bind other people. "They consist, all of them," says he, "in so many contrivances for avoiding the obligation of appealing to any external standard, and for prevailing upon the reader to accept the author's sentiment or opinion as a reason for itself."

This, however, is not fair treatment of the believers in other moral principles than that of utility. All modes of speech are employed in an ignorant manner, by ignorant people; but no one who had thought deeply and systematically enough to be entitled to the name of a philosopher, ever supposed that his *own* private sentiments of approbation and disapprobation must necessarily be well-founded, and needed not to be compared with any external standard. The answer of such persons to Mr. Bentham would be, that by an inductive and analytical examination of the human mind, they had satisfied themselves, that what we call our moral sentiments (that is, the feelings of complacency and aversion we experience when we compare actions of our own or of other people with our standard of right and wrong) are as much part of the original constitution of man's nature as the desire of happiness and the fear of suffering: That those sentiments do not indeed attach themselves to the same actions under all circumstances, but neither do they, in attaching themselves to actions, follow the law of utility, but certain other general laws, which are the same in all mankind naturally; though education or external circumstances may counteract them, by creating artificial associations stronger than they. No proof, indeed, can be given that we ought to abide by these laws; but neither can any proof be given, that we ought to regulate our conduct by utility. All that can be said is, that the pursuit of happiness is natural to us; and so, it is

contended, is the reverence for, and the inclination to square our actions by, certain general laws of morality.

Anyone who is acquainted with the ethical doctrines either of the Reid and Stewart school, or of the German metaphysicians (not to go further back), knows that such would be the answer of those philosophers to Mr. Bentham; and it is an answer of which Mr. Bentham's writings furnish no sufficient refutation. For it is evident, that these views of the origin of moral distinctions are *not*, what he says all such views are, destitute of any precise and tangible meaning; nor chargeable with setting up as a standard the feelings of the particular person. They set up as a standard what are assumed (on grounds which are considered sufficient) to be the instincts of the species, or principles of our common nature as universal and inexplicable as instincts.

To pass judgment on these doctrines, belongs to a profounder and subtler metaphysics than Mr. Bentham possessed. I apprehend it will be the judgment of posterity, that in his views of what, in the felicitous expression of Hobbes, may be called the *philosophia prima*, it has for the most part, even when he was most completely in the right, been reserved for others to *prove* him so. The greatest of Mr. Bentham's defects, his insufficient knowledge and appreciation of the thoughts of other men, shows itself constantly in his grappling with some delusive shadow of an adversary's opinion, and leaving the actual substance unharmed.

After laying down the principle of Utility, Mr. Bentham is occupied through the most voluminous and the most permanently valuable part of his works, in constructing the outlines of practical ethics and legislation, and filling up some portions of the latter science (or rather art) in great detail; by the uniform and unflinching application of his own greatest-happiness principle, from which the eminently consistent and systematic character of his intellect prevented him from ever swerving. In the writings of no philosopher, probably, are to be detected so few contradictions—so few instances of even momentary deviation from the principles he himself has laid down.

It is perhaps fortunate that Mr. Bentham devoted a much larger share of his time and labour to the subject of legislation, than to that of morals; for the mode in which he understood and applied the principle of Utility, appears to me far more conducive to the attainment of true and valuable results in the former, than in the latter of these two branches of inquiry. The recognition of happiness as the only thing desirable in itself, and of the production of the state of things most favourable to happiness as the only rational end both of morals and policy, by no means necessarily leads to the doctrine of expediency as professed by Paley; the ethical canon which judges of the morality of an act or a class of actions, solely by the probable *consequences* of that particular kind of act, supposing it to be generally practised. This is a very small part indeed of what a more enlarged understanding of the "greatest-happiness principle" would require us to take into the account. A certain kind of action, as for example, theft, or lying, would, if commonly practised, occasion certain evil consequences to society: but those evil consequences are far from constituting the entire moral bearings of the vices of theft or lying. We shall have a very imperfect view of the relation of those practices to the general happiness, if we suppose them to exist singly, and insulated. All acts suppose certain dispositions, and habits of mind and heart, which may be in themselves states of enjoyment or of wretchedness, and which must be fruitful in *other* consequences, besides those particular acts. No person can be a thief or a liar without being much else: and if our moral judgments and feelings with respect to a person convicted of either vice, were grounded solely upon the pernicious tendency of thieving and of lying, they would be partial and incomplete; many considerations would be omitted, which are at least equally "germane to the matter;" many which, by leaving them out of our general views, we may indeed teach ourselves a habit of overlooking, but which it is impossible for any of us not to be influenced by, in particular cases, in proportion as they are forced upon our attention.

Now, the great fault I have to find with Mr. Bentham as a moral philosopher, and the source of the chief part of

the temporary mischief which in that character, along with a vastly greater amount of permanent good, he must be allowed to have produced, is this : that he has practically, to a very great extent, confounded the principle of Utility with the principle of specific consequences, and has habitually made up his estimate of the approbation or blame due to a particular kind of action, from a calculation solely of the consequences to which that very action, if practised generally, would itself lead. He has largely exemplified, and contributed very widely to diffuse, a tone of thinking, according to which any kind of action or any habit, which in its own specific consequences cannot be proved to be necessarily or probably productive of unhappiness to the agent himself or to others, is supposed to be fully justified ; and any disapprobation or aversion entertained towards the individual by reason of it, is set down from that time forward as prejudice and superstition. It is not considered (at least, not habitually considered) whether the act or habit in question, though not in itself necessarily pernicious, may not form part of a *character* essentially pernicious, or at least essentially deficient in some quality eminently conducive to the "greatest happiness." To apply such a standard as this, would indeed often require a much deeper insight into the formation of character, and knowledge of the internal workings of human nature, than Mr. Bentham possessed. But, in a greater or less degree, he, and everyone else, judges by this standard : even those who are warped, by some partial view, into the omission of all such elements from their general speculation.

When the moralist thus overlooks the relation of an act to a certain state of mind as its cause, and its connection through that common cause with large classes and groups of actions apparently very little resembling itself, his estimation even of the consequences of the very act itself, is rendered imperfect. For it may be affirmed with few exceptions, that any act whatever has a tendency to fix and perpetuate the state or character of mind in which itself has originated. And if that important element in the moral relations of the action be not taken into account by

the moralist as a cause, neither probably will it be taken into account as a consequence.

Mr. Bentham is far from having altogether overlooked this side of the subject. Indeed, those most original and instructive, though, as I conceive, in their spirit, partially erroneous chapters, on *motives* and on *dispositions*, in his first great work, the Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation, open up a direct and broad path to these most important topics. It is not the less true that Mr. Bentham, and many others, following his example, when they came to discuss particular questions of ethics, have commonly, in the superior stress which they laid upon the specific consequences of a class of acts, rejected all contemplation of the action in its general bearings upon the entire moral being of the agent; or have, to say the least, thrown those considerations so far into the background, as to be almost out of sight. And by so doing they have not only marred the value of many of their speculations, considered as mere philosophical inquiries, but have always run the risk of incurring, and in many cases have in my opinion actually incurred, serious practical errors.

This incompleteness, however, in Mr. Bentham's views, was not of a nature materially to diminish the value of his speculations through the greater part of the field of legislation. Those of the bearings of an action, upon which Mr. Bentham bestowed almost exclusive attention, were also those with which almost alone legislation is conversant. The legislator enjoins or prohibits an action, with very little regard to the general moral excellence or turpitude which it implies; he looks to the consequences to society of the particular kind of action; his object is not to render people incapable of *desiring* a crime, but to deter them from actually *committing* it. Taking human beings as he finds them, he endeavours to supply such inducements as will constrain even persons of the dispositions the most at variance with the general happiness, to practise as great a degree of regard to it in their actual conduct, as can be obtained from them by such means without preponderant inconvenience. A theory, therefore,

which considers little in an action besides that action's *own* consequences, will generally be sufficient to serve the purposes of a philosophy of legislation. Such a philosophy will be most apt to fail in the consideration of the greater social questions—the theory of organic institutions and general forms of polity; for those (unlike the details of legislation) to be duly estimated, must be viewed as the great instruments of forming the national character; of carrying forward the members of the community towards perfection, or preserving them from degeneracy. This, as might in some measure be expected, is a point of view in which, except for some partial or limited purpose, Mr. Bentham seldom contemplates these questions. And this signal omission is one of the greatest of the deficiencies by which his speculations on the theory of government, though full of valuable ideas, are rendered, in my judgment, altogether inconclusive in their general results.

To these we shall advert more fully hereafter. As yet I have not acquitted myself of the more agreeable task of setting forth some part of the services which the philosophy of legislation owes to Mr. Bentham.

The greatest service of all, that for which posterity will award most honour to his name, is one that is his exclusively, and can be shared by no one present or to come; it is the service which can be performed only once for any science, that of pointing out by what method of investigation it may be *made* a science. What Bacon did for physical knowledge, Mr. Bentham has done for philosophical legislation. Before Bacon's time, many physical facts had been ascertained; and previously to Mr. Bentham, mankind were in possession of many just and valuable detached observations on the making of laws. But he was the first who attempted regularly to deduce all the secondary and intermediate principles of law, by direct and systematic inference from the one great axiom or principle of general utility. In all existing systems of law, those secondary principles or dicta in which the essence of the systems resided, had grown up in detail, and even when founded in views of utility, were not the result of any scientific and comprehensive course of inquiry; but more frequently

were purely technical; that is, they had grown out of circumstances purely *historical*, and, not having been altered when those circumstances changed, had nothing left to rest upon but fictions, and unmeaning forms. Take for instance the law of real property; the whole of which continues to this very day to be founded on the doctrine of feudal tenures, when those tenures have long ceased to exist except in the phraseology of Westminster Hall. Nor was the *theory* of law in a better state than the practical systems; speculative jurists having dared little more than to refine somewhat upon the technical maxims of the particular body of jurisprudence which they happened to have studied. Mr. Bentham was the first who had the genius and courage to conceive the idea of bringing back the science to first principles. This could not be done, could scarcely even be attempted, without, as a necessary consequence, making obvious the utter worthlessness of many, and the crudity and want of precision of almost all, the maxims, which had previously passed everywhere for principles of law.

Mr. Bentham, moreover, has warred against the errors of existing systems of jurisprudence, in a more direct manner than by merely presenting the contrary truths. The force of argument with which he rent asunder the fantastic and illogical maxims on which the various technical systems are founded, and exposed the flagrant evils which they practically produce, is only equalled by the pungent sarcasm and exquisite humour with which he has derided their absurdities, and the eloquent declamation which he continually pours forth against them, sometimes in the form of lamentation, and sometimes of invective.

This then was the first, and perhaps the grandest achievement of Mr. Bentham; the entire discrediting of all technical systems; and the example which he set of treating law as no peculiar mystery, but a simple piece of practical business, wherein means were to be adapted to ends, as in any of the other arts of life. To have accomplished this, supposing him to have done nothing else, is to have equalled the glory of the greatest scientific benefactors of the human race.

But Mr. Bentham, unlike Bacon, did not merely prophesy a science ; he made large strides towards the creation of one. He was the first who conceived with anything approaching to precision, the idea of a Code, or complete body of law ; and the distinctive characters of its essential parts,—the Civil Law, the Penal Law, and the Law of Procedure. On the first two of these three departments he rendered valuable service ; the third he actually created. Conformably to the habits of his mind, he set about investigating *ab initio*, a philosophy or science for each of the three branches. He did with the received principles of each, what a good code would do with the laws themselves ;—extirpated the bad, substituting others : re-enacted the good, but in so much clearer and more methodical a form, that those who were most familiar with them before, scarcely recognized them as the same. Even upon old truths, when they pass through his hands, he leaves so many of his marks, that often he almost seems to claim the discovery of what he has only systematized.

In creating the philosophy of Civil Law, he proceeded not much beyond establishing on the proper basis some of its most general principles, and cursorily discussing some of the most interesting of its details. Nearly the whole of what he has published on this branch of law, is contained in the “*Traité de Législation*,” edited by M. Dumont. To the most difficult part, and that which most needed a master-hand to clear away its difficulties, the nomenclature and arrangement of the Civil Code, he contributed little, except detached observations, and criticisms upon the errors of his predecessors. The “*Vue Générale d’un Corps Complet de Législation*,” included in the work just cited, contains almost all which he has given to us on this subject.

In the department of Penal Law, he is the author of the best attempt yet made towards a philosophical classification of offences. The theory of punishments (for which however more had been done by his predecessors, than for any other part of the science of law) he left nearly complete.

The theory of Procedure (including that of the constitu-

tion of the courts of justice) he found in a more utterly barbarous state than even either of the other branches; and he left it incomparably the most perfect. There is scarcely a question of practical importance in this most important department, which he has not settled. He has left next to nothing for his successors.

He has shown with the force of demonstration, and has enforced and illustrated the truth in a hundred ways, that by sweeping away the greater part of the artificial rules and forms which obtain in all the countries called civilized, and adopting the simple and direct modes of investigation, which all men employ in endeavouring to ascertain facts for their own private knowledge, it is possible to get rid of at least nine-tenths of the expense, and ninety-nine hundredths of the delay, of law proceedings; not only with no increase, but with an almost incredible diminution, of the chances of erroneous decision. He has also established irrefragably the principles of a good judicial establishment: a division of the country into districts, with *one* judge in each, appointed only for a limited period, and deciding all sorts of cases; with a deputy under him, appointed and removable by himself: an appeal lying in all cases whatever, but by the transmission of papers only, to a supreme court or courts, consisting each of only *one* judge, and stationed in the metropolis.

It is impossible within the compass of this sketch, to attempt any further statement of Mr. Bentham's principles and views on the great science which first became a science in his hands.

As an analyst of human nature (the faculty in which above all it is necessary that an ethical philosopher should excel) I cannot rank Mr. Bentham very high. He has done little in this department, beyond introducing what appears to me a very deceptive phraseology, and furnishing a catalogue of the "springs of action," from which some of the most important are left out.

That the actions of sentient beings are wholly determined by pleasure and pain, is the fundamental principle from which he starts; and thereupon Mr. Bentham creates a *motive*, and an *interest*, corresponding to each pleasure or

pain, and affirms that our actions are determined by our *interests*, by the *preponderant* interest, by the *balance* of motives. Now if this only means what was before asserted, that our actions are determined by pleasure and pain, that simple and unambiguous mode of stating the proposition is preferable. But under cover of the obscurer phrase a meaning creeps in, both to the author's mind and the reader's, which goes much farther, and is entirely false: that all our acts are determined by pains and pleasures *in prospect*, pains and pleasures to which we look forward as the *consequences* of our acts. This, as a universal truth, can in no way be maintained. The pain or pleasure which determines our conduct is as frequently one which *precedes* the moment of action as one which follows it. A man *may*, it is true, be deterred, in circumstances of temptation, from perpetrating a crime, by his dread of the punishment, or of the remorse, which he fears he may have to endure *after* the guilty act; and in that case we may say with some kind of propriety, that his conduct is swayed by the balance of motives; or, if you will, of interests. But the case *may* be, and is to the full as likely to be, that he recoils from the very thought of committing the act; the idea of placing himself in such a situation is so painful, that he cannot dwell upon it long enough to have even the physical power of perpetrating the crime. His conduct is determined by pain; but by a pain which precedes the act, not by one which is expected to follow it. Not only *may* this be so, but unless it be so, the man is not really virtuous. The fear of pain *consequent* upon the act, cannot arise, unless there be *deliberation*; and the man as well as "the woman who deliberates," is in imminent danger of being lost. With what propriety shrinking from an action without deliberation, can be called yielding to an *interest*, I cannot see. *Interest* surely conveys, and is intended to convey, the idea of an *end*, to which the conduct (whether it be act or forbearance) is designed as the *means*. Nothing of this sort takes place in the above example. It would be more correct to say that conduct is *sometimes* determined by an *interest*, that is, by a deliberate and conscious aim; and sometimes by an *impulse*, that is, by a feeling (call it an

association if you think fit) which has no ulterior end, the act or forbearance becoming an end in itself.

The attempt, again, to *enumerate* motives, that is, human desires and aversions, seems to me to be in its very conception an error. Motives are innumerable: there is nothing whatever which may not become an object of desire or of dislike by association. It may be desirable to distinguish by peculiar notice the motives which are strongest and of most frequent operation; but Mr. Bentham has not even done this. In his list of motives, though he includes sympathy, he omits conscience, or the feeling of duty: one would never imagine from reading him that any human being ever did an act merely because it is right, or abstained from it merely because it is wrong. In this Mr. Bentham differs widely from Hartley, who, although he considers the moral sentiments to be wholly the result of association, does not therefore deny them a place in his system, but includes the feelings of "the moral sense" as one of the six classes into which he divides pleasures and pains. In Mr. Bentham's own mind, deeply imbued as it was with the "greatest-happiness principle," this motive was probably so blended with that of sympathy as to be undistinguishable from it; but he should have recollected that those who acknowledge another standard of right and wrong than happiness, or who have never reflected on the subject at all, have often very strong feelings of moral obligation; and whether a person's standard be happiness or anything else, his attachment to his standard is not necessarily in proportion to his benevolence. Persons of weak sympathies have often a strong feeling of justice; and others, again, with the feelings of benevolence in considerable strength, have scarcely any consciousness of moral obligation at all.

It is scarcely necessary to point out that the habitual omission of so important a spring of action in an enumeration professing to be complete, must tend to create a habit of overlooking the same phenomenon, and consequently making no allowance for it, in other moral speculations. It is difficult to imagine any more fruitful source of gross error; though one would be apt to suppose the oversight

an impossible one, without this evidence of its having been committed by one of the greatest thinkers our species has produced. How can we suppose him to be alive to the existence and force of the motive in particular cases, who omits it in a deliberate and comprehensive enumeration of all the influences by which human conduct is governed?

In laying down as a philosophical axiom, that men's actions are always obedient to their interests, Mr. Bentham did no more than dress up the very trivial proposition that all persons do what they feel themselves most disposed to do, in terms which appeared to him more precise, and better suited to the purposes of philosophy, than those more familiar expressions. He by no means intended by this assertion to impute universal selfishness to mankind, for he reckoned the motive of sympathy as an *interest*, and would have included conscience under the same appellation, if that motive had found any place in his philosophy, as a distinct principle from benevolence. He distinguished two kinds of interests, the self-regarding and the social: in vulgar discourse, the name is restricted to the former kind alone.

But there cannot be a greater mistake than to suppose that, because we may ourselves be perfectly *conscious* of an ambiguity in our language, that ambiguity therefore has no effect in perverting our modes of thought. I am persuaded, from experience, that this habit of speaking of all the feelings which govern mankind under the name of *interests*, is almost always in point of fact connected with a tendency to consider *interest* in the vulgar sense, that is, purely self-regarding interest, as exercising, by the very constitution of human nature, a far more exclusive and paramount control over human actions than it really does exercise. Such, certainly, was the tendency of Mr. Bentham's own opinions. Habitually, and throughout his works, the moment he has shown that a man's *selfish* interest would prompt him to a particular course of action, he lays it down without further parley that the man's interest lies that way; and, by sliding insensibly from the vulgar sense of the word into the philosophical, and from the philosophical back into the vulgar, the conclusion which is always brought out is, that the

man will act as the selfish interest prompts. The extent to which Mr. Bentham was a believer in the predominance of the selfish principle in human nature, may be seen from the sweeping terms in which, in his *Book of Fallacies*, he expressly lays down that predominance as a philosophical axiom.

"In *every* human breast (rare and short-lived ebullitions, the result of some extraordinarily strong stimulus or excitement, excepted) self-regarding interest is predominant over social interest; each person's own individual interest over the interests of all other persons taken together." Pp. 392-3.

In another passage of the same work (p. 363) he says, "Taking the whole of life together, there exists not, *nor ever can exist*, that human being in whose instance any public interest he can have had will not, in so far as depends upon himself, have been sacrificed to his own personal interest. Towards the advancement of the public interest, all that the most public-spirited (which is as much as to say the most virtuous) of men can do, is to do what depends upon himself towards bringing the public interest, that is, his own personal share in the public interest, to a state as nearly approaching to coincidence, and on as few occasions amounting to a state of repugnance, as possible, with his private interests."

By the promulgation of such views of human nature, and by a general tone of thought and expression perfectly in harmony with them, I conceive Mr. Bentham's writings to have done and to be doing very serious evil. It is by such things that the more enthusiastic and generous minds are prejudiced against all his other speculations, and against the very attempt to make ethics and politics a subject of precise and philosophical thinking; which attempt, indeed, if it were necessarily connected with such views, would be still more pernicious than the vague and flashy declamation for which it is proposed as a substitute. The effect is still worse on the minds of those who are not shocked and repelled by this tone of thinking, for on them it must be perverting to their whole moral nature. It is difficult to form the conception of a tendency more inconsistent with

all rational hope of good for the human species, than that which must be impressed by such doctrines, upon any mind in which they find acceptance.

There are, there have been, many human beings, in whom the motives of patriotism or of benevolence have been permanent, steady principles of action, superior to any ordinary, and in not a few instances, to any possible, temptations of personal interest. There are, and have been, multitudes, in whom the motive of conscience or moral obligation has been thus paramount. There is nothing in the constitution of human nature to forbid its being so in all mankind. Until it is so, the race will never enjoy one-tenth part of the happiness which our nature is susceptible of. I regard any considerable increase of human happiness, through mere changes in outward circumstances, unaccompanied by changes in the state of the desires, as hopeless; not to mention that while the desires are circumscribed in self, there can be no adequate motive for exertions tending to modify to good ends even those external circumstances. No man's individual share of any public good which he can hope to realize by his efforts, is an equivalent for the sacrifice of his ease, and of the personal objects which he might attain by another course of conduct. The balance can be turned in favour of virtuous exertion, only by the interest of *feeling* or by that of *conscience*—those “social interests,” the necessary subordination of which to “self-regarding” is so lightly assumed.

But the power of anyone to realize in himself the state of mind, without which his own enjoyment of life can be but poor and scanty, and on which all our hopes of happiness or moral perfection to the species must rest, depends entirely upon his having faith in the actual existence of such feelings and dispositions in others, and in their possibility for himself. It is for those in whom the feelings of virtue are weak, that ethical writing is chiefly needful, and its proper office is to strengthen those feelings. But to be qualified for this task, it is necessary, first to have, and next to show, in every sentence and in every line, a firm, unwavering confidence in man's capability of virtue. It is by a sort of sympathetic contagion, or inspiration, that

a noble mind assimilates other minds to itself; and no one was ever inspired by one whose own inspiration was not sufficient to give him faith in the possibility of making others feel what *he* feels.

Upon those who *need* to be strengthened and upheld by a really inspired moralist—such a moralist as Socrates, or Plato, or (speaking humanly and not theologically) as Christ; the effect of such writings as Mr. Bentham's, if they be read and believed and their spirit imbibed, must either be hopeless despondency and gloom, or a reckless giving themselves up to a life of that miserable self-seeking, which they are there taught to regard as inherent in their original and unalterable nature.

Mr. Bentham's speculations on politics in the narrow sense, that is, on the theory of government, are distinguished by his usual characteristic, that of beginning at the beginning. He places before himself man in society without a government, and, considering what sort of government it would be advisable to construct, finds that the most expedient would be a representative democracy. Whatever may be the value of this conclusion, the mode in which it is arrived at appears to me to be fallacious; for it assumes that mankind are alike in all times and all places, that they have the same wants and are exposed to the same evils, and that if the same institutions do not suit them, it is only because in the more backward stages of improvement they have not wisdom to see what institutions are most for their good. How to invest certain servants of the people with the power necessary for the protection of person and property, with the greatest possible facility to the people of changing the depositaries of that power, when they think it is abused; such is the only problem in social organization which Mr. Bentham has proposed to himself. Yet this is but a part of the real problem. It never seems to have occurred to him to regard political institutions in a higher light, as the principal means of the social education of a people. Had he done so, he would have seen that the same institutions will no more suit two nations in different stages of civilization, than the same lessons will suit children of different ages. As the degree of civilization

already attained varies, so does the kind of social influence necessary for carrying the community forward to the next stage of its progress. For a tribe of North American Indians, improvement means, taming down their proud and solitary self-dependence; for a body of emancipated negroes, it means accustoming them to be self-dependent, instead of being merely obedient to orders: for our semi-barbarous ancestors it would have meant, softening them: for a race of enervated Asiatics it would mean hardening them. How can the same social organization be fitted for producing so many contrary effects?

The prevailing error of Mr. Bentham's views of human nature appears to me to be this—he supposes mankind to be swayed by only a part of the inducements which really actuate them; but of that part he imagines them to be much cooler and more thoughtful calculators than they really are. He has, I think, been, to a certain extent, misled in the theory of politics, by supposing that the submission of the mass of mankind to an established government is mainly owing to a reasoning perception of the necessity of legal protection, and of the common interest of all in a prompt and zealous obedience to the law. He was not, I am persuaded, aware, how very much of the really wonderful acquiescence of mankind in any government which they find established, is the effect of mere habit and imagination, and, therefore, depends upon the preservation of something like continuity of existence in the institutions, and identity in their outward forms; cannot transfer itself easily to new institutions, even though in themselves preferable; and is greatly shaken when there occurs anything like a break in the line of historical duration—anything which can be termed the end of the old constitution and the beginning of a new one.

The constitutional writers of our own country, anterior to Mr. Bentham, had carried feelings of this kind to the height of a superstition; they never considered what was best adapted to their own times, but only what had existed in former times, even in times that had long gone by. It is not very many years since such were the principal grounds on which parliamentary reform itself was de-

fended. Mr. Bentham has done much service in discrediting, as he has done completely, this school of politicians, and exposing the absurd sacrifice of present ends to antiquated means; but he has, I think, himself fallen into a contrary error. The very fact that a certain set of political institutions already exist, have long existed, and have become associated with all the historical recollections of a people, is in itself, as far as it goes, a property which adapts them to that people, and gives them a great advantage over any new institutions in obtaining that ready and willing resignation to what has once been decided by lawful authority, which alone renders possible those innumerable compromises between adverse interests and expectations, without which no government could be carried on for a year, and with difficulty even for a week. Of the perception of this important truth, scarcely a trace is visible in Mr. Bentham's writings.¹

It is impossible, however, to contest to Mr. Bentham, on this subject or on any other which he has touched, the merit, and it is very great, of having brought forward into notice one of the faces of the truth, and a highly important one. Whether on government, on morals, or on any of the other topics on which his speculations are comparatively imperfect, they are still highly instructive and valuable to

¹ It is necessary, however, to distinguish between Mr. Bentham's practical conclusions, as an English politician of the present day, and his systematic views as a political philosopher. It is to the latter only that the foregoing observations are intended to apply: on the former I am not now called upon to pronounce any opinion. For the just estimation of his merits, the question is not what were his conclusions, but what was his mode of arriving at them. Theoretical views most widely different, may lead to the same practical corollaries: and that part of any system of philosophy which bodies itself forth in directions for immediate practice, must be so small a portion of the whole as to furnish a very insufficient criterion of the degree in which it approximates to scientific and universal truth. Let Mr. Bentham's opinions on the political questions of the day be as sound or as mistaken as any one may deem them, the fact which is of importance in judging of Mr. Bentham himself is that those opinions rest upon a basis of half-truth. Each inquirer is left to add the other half for himself, and confirm or correct the practical conclusion as the other lights of which he happens to be in possession allow him.

any one who is capable of supplying the remainder of the truth; they are calculated to mislead only by the pretension which they invariably set up of being the whole truth, a complete theory and philosophy of the subject. Mr. Bentham was more a thinker than a reader; he seldom compared his ideas with those of other philosophers, and was by no means aware how many thoughts had existed in other minds, which his doctrines did not afford the means either to refute or to appreciate.¹

¹ In the book to which the above was contributed ("England and the English"), Bulwer-Lytton himself gave "A few Observations on Mr. Mill." This has reference to J. S. Mill's father, and deals chiefly with the elder Mill as a disciple of Bentham. The following is an extract from the versatile, and at this time somewhat Radical, writer, who afterwards became the Tory Lord Lytton: "Mr. Mill is eminently a metaphysician; Bentham as little of a metaphysician as any one can be who ever attained to equal success in the science of philosophy. Every moral or political system must be indeed a corollary from some general view of human nature. But Bentham, though punctilious and precise in the premises he advances, confines himself, in that very preciseness, to a few simple and general principles. *He seldom analyses*—he studies the human mind rather after the method of natural history than of philosophy. He enumerates—he classifies the facts—but he does not *account* for them. You read in his works an enumeration of pains and pleasures—an enumeration of motives—an enumeration of the properties which constitute the value of a pleasure or a pain. But Bentham does not even attempt to *explain* any of the feelings or impulses enumerated—he does not attempt to show that they are subject to the laws of any more elementary phenomena of human nature. Of human nature indeed in its rarer or more hidden parts, Bentham knew but little—wherever he attained to valuable results, which his predecessors had missed, it was by estimating more justly than they the action of some outward circumstance upon the more obvious and vulgar elements of our nature—not by understanding better than they, the workings of those elements which are not obvious and not vulgar. Where but a moderate knowledge of these last was necessary to the correctness of his conclusions, he was apt to stray farther from the truth than even the votaries of commonplace. He often threw aside a trite and unsatisfactory truism, in order to replace it with a paradoxical error."—ED.

(C.) MILL ON BOWRING'S "LIFE OF BENTHAM."

(From the "*Edinburgh Review*," 1844.)

LETTER FROM JOHN S. MILL, ESQ., TO THE EDITOR.¹

THOUGH it is not the practice to insert in this Journal any controversial statements respecting the Articles contained in it, the Editor's great respect for the memory of the Father defended in the following Letter, and for the Son who writes it, induces him to comply with that claim "for justice" which it urges, by giving it all the publicity which its appearance here can insure. He leaves all comment or observation upon its contents to others; feeling, that if there is any case in which, independently of any opinion as to the justness of the complaint, such a claim ought to be complied with, it must be that where a Son craves the opportunity of vindicating, in the same work where he thinks it was injured, the character of a Father of whose name and services to the cause of liberal knowledge he is justly proud.

"SIR,—In an Article on Dr. Bowring's 'Life of Bentham,' published in the last Number of the '*Edinburgh Review*,' statements are made, on the authority of that work, tending to give a most false impression of the character of one who, by his writings and personal influence, has done more for philosophy and good government than almost any man of his generation, and who has

¹ This appeared in the "*Edinburgh Review*" of January, 1844, in reference to an article on Bowring's "*Life of Bentham*," which had appeared in the previous October. The review in question is understood to have been by William Empson (editor, 1847-52). At this time Mill himself was an "*Edinburgh Reviewer*." His first article in that capacity was on De Tocqueville, 1840.—ED.

peculiar claims upon the justice of the 'Edinburgh Review,' to which he was for many years an important contributor—I mean the late Mr. James Mill, my father.

"That those whose lives are devoted to the service of mankind should meet with inadequate appreciation from their contemporaries can surprise no one; but when their motives and moral character are misrepresented, not only justice, but the public interest requires that the misrepresentation should be corrected; and I trust you will not refuse the necessary opportunity to the person on whom that duty is, in the present case, peculiarly incumbent.

"The Reviewer, quoting from the 'Memoirs,' says: 'Bentham said of Mill, that his willingness to do good to others depended too much on his power of making the good done to them subservient to good done to himself. His creed of politics results less from love for the many than from hatred of the few. It is too much under the influence of social and dissocial affection.'

"What is here promulgated as Bentham's deliberate judgment, was never, I will venture to affirm, believed by any human being who had the smallest knowledge of Mr. Mill.

"I know not how a biographer is to be justified in giving publicity and permanence to every idle word which may have been said to the prejudice of others, under some passing impression or momentary irritation. It would, besides, be easy to show, that the reports of Bentham's conversations contained in the Biography, abound in the inaccuracies which are to be expected when things carelessly stated by one person, are afterwards noted down from memory by another. But whatever Bentham may really have said, when a statement so injurious to another is made on his authority, justice to that other imposes the necessity of declaring what the 'Memoirs' amply confirm, that among Mr. Bentham's eminent intellectual endowments, capacity for judging of character was not one. The manner of his intercourse with others was not favourable to his acquiring a real knowledge of them; and his warmest friends and admirers often lamented that his

opinion of men depended less on their merits than on accidental circumstances, and on the state of his personal relations with them at the time. On no other principle can I account for his expressing any opinion of Mr. Mill bearing the complexion of that quoted in the Article.

"It imputes to Mr. Mill, as the source of his democratic opinions, the vulgarest motives of an unprincipled demagogue; namely, selfish ambition, and a malignant hatred of the ruling classes. Now, there was perhaps no one man among Mr. Mill's contemporaries, holding similar opinions to his, who stood more manifestly clear from even the suspicion of these motives.

"He could in no way hope for 'good to himself' from the opinions he professed. In many respects they stood in the way of his personal interest. They deprived his writings of the countenance of either of the great parties in the state, in times when that countenance was much more important than it now is, and when he might have obtained it as easily as many others did, who had not a tithe of his talents. Even had his opinions become predominant, which he never expected would be the case during his life, he would, as he well knew, have reaped no personal benefit from them; and assuredly, the time when he embraced democratic doctrines, was a time when no person in his senses could have entertained the smallest hope of gaining any thing by their profession.

"As for 'hatred of the few,' the phrase seems introduced solely to round an antithesis. There never was a man more free from any feelings of hatred. His hostility was to institutions and principles, not to persons. It was his invariable doctrine that the ruling individuals were not intentionally bad, nor in any way worse than other men. Towards some of them he entertained strong feelings of personal friendship. A certain asperity, no doubt, appears occasionally in his controversial writings; but it proceeded from no private motives:—the individuals against whom it showed itself never injured him, never wounded his vanity, or interfered with his interests; his path and theirs never crossed. It has been shown in the highly honourable acknowledgment recently made by Mr. Macaulay, how far

Mr. Mill was from retaining any grudge, even when he *had* been personally attacked, and with a severity which the assailant himself cannot now approve. Mr. Mill never wrote severe things of any one but from honest conviction, and in the exercise, as he believed, of a duty; and the fault, if fault it be, is one which we of this age may view with leniency, when we see how often the absence of it has no better source than incapacity of earnest feeling on any subject not personal.

“The Reviewer, still following the ‘Memoirs,’ enters into some points of private history, of so personal a nature, and so little interesting to the public, that it is unpleasant to feel called upon to speak of them; but since the impression conveyed is, that Mr. Mill received obligations from Bentham, such as one man rarely receives from another, and that for these obligations he made but an ungrateful return, it is necessary to show how incorrectly the facts are stated, and how false a colouring is put upon such of them as are true.

“The statements in the ‘Memoirs’ are, that Bentham ‘found Mill in great distress, about to emigrate to Caen; that he put him into a house, and took him and his family to live with him for the half of every year, for ten years together.’

“At the time when Bentham is said to have ‘*found* Mill about to emigrate,’ they had already been intimate for many years, as the dates prove; since the ‘emigration’ spoken of could not have been projected until after the Continent was open. Like many others, Mr. Mill had thoughts of removing to a country where a small income would go further in supporting and educating a family; but a person is not usually said to be ‘in great distress’ who never in his life was in debt, and whose income, whatever it might be, always covered his expenses.

“Secondly, that Bentham ‘put him into a house.’ If this means that he occupied any house of Bentham’s, free of rent, the assertion is contrary to fact. He paid to Mr. Bentham between £50 and £60 a-year rent, which was as high a rent as he had been accustomed to pay.

“Thirdly, that Mr. Mill and his family lived with

Mr. Bentham for half of ten years. They did so for half of *four* years, at Ford Abbey; and they passed small portions of several previous summers with him at Barrow Green. His last visit to Barrow Green, I know, was of not more than a month's duration, and the previous ones all together, did not, as I am informed, (for my own memory does not reach so far back,) extend to more than six months, or seven at most. Bentham himself, in a letter published in the 'Life,' says, the half of *five* years: which is not far from the mark.

"The pecuniary benefit, therefore, which Mr. Mill derived from his intimacy with Bentham consisted in this, that he and his family lived with him as his guests, while he was in the country, periods amounting in all to about two years and a half. I have no reason to think that this hospitality was either given, or accepted, as pecuniary assistance; and I will add, that the obligation was not exclusively on one side. Bentham was not then, as he was afterwards, surrounded by persons who courted his society, and were ever ready to volunteer their services; and to a man of his secluded habits, it was no little advantage to have near him such a man as Mr. Mill, to whose advice and aid he habitually had recourse in all business transactions with the outward world, of a troublesome or irksome nature. Such as the connection was, that it was not of Mr. Mill's seeking, is shown by a remarkable letter from him to Mr. Bentham, which is to be found in the 'Life,' and which was written, as its date proves, during the first visit to Ford Abbey.

"Lastly, the Reviewer, on his own authority, asserts, that Mr. Mill became estranged from Bentham, and, in after years, 'so far withdrew his allegiance from the dead lion as to deny that he had ever called him master.' There was, during the last few years of Bentham's life, less frequency and cordiality of intercourse than in former years, chiefly because Bentham had acquired newer, and to him, more agreeable intimacies; but Mr. Mill's feeling never altered towards him, nor did he ever fail, publicly or privately, in giving due honour to Bentham's name, and acknowledgment of the intellectual debt he owed to him.

The ‘allegiance’ which he disclaimed was only that which no man, who thinks for himself, will own to another. He was no otherwise a disciple of Bentham, than of Hobbes, Hartley, or Ricardo.

“These are small matters in themselves—quite unworthy to be brought before the public; but if the things are trivial, the inferences drawn from them are not so, and nothing is small which involves injustice to the memory, and a total misconception of the character, of an eminent man. Reluctant, therefore, as I am so to occupy your space; yet as the extensive circulation of the ‘Edinburgh Review’ has been given to these misstatements, I do not feel that I am unreasonable in soliciting a place, in the next number, for this contradiction of them.

“I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

“J. S. MILL.”

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ERRATUM.

P. 386, line 9. After "The idea of a rational democracy is,"
insert "not."

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